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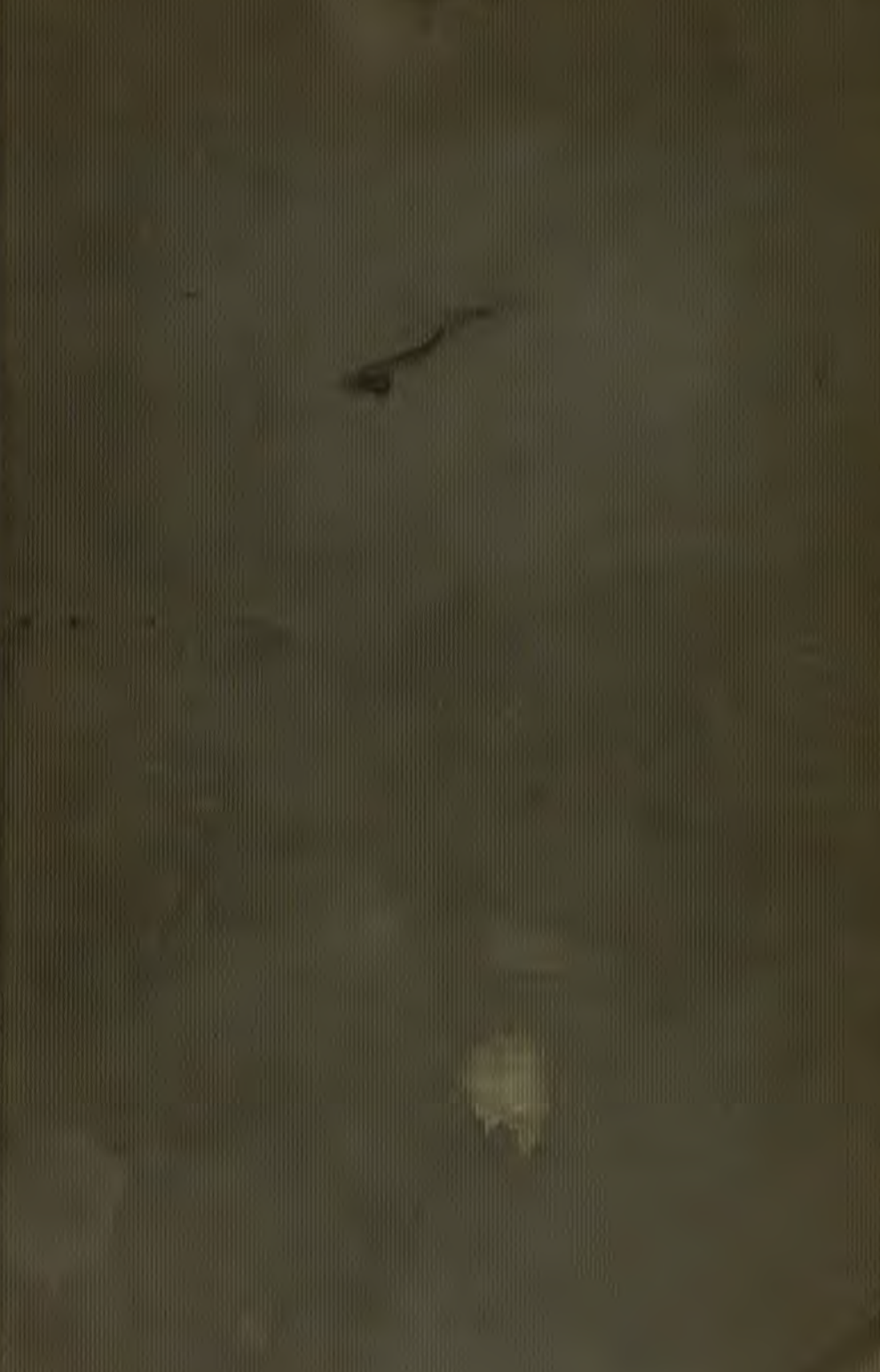
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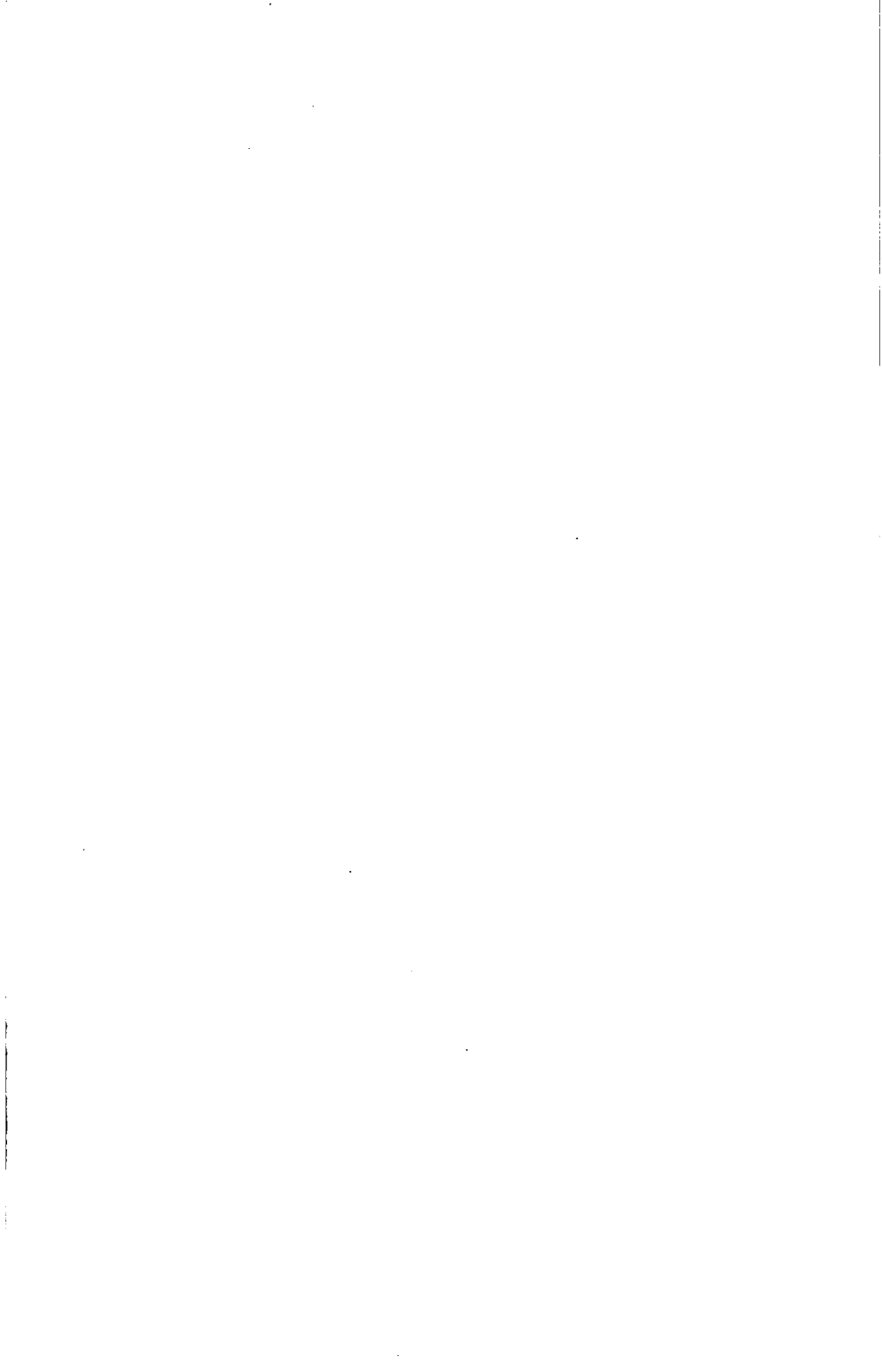
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**SECRET MEMOIRS**  
**OF THE**  
**COURT OF BERLIN**  
**UNDER WILLIAM II**  

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**VOLUME II**





**Secret Memoirs**

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**THE KAISER AND KAISERIN OF GERMANY  
VOLUME II**

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# **Courts of Europe**

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**PRIVATE LIVES OF**  
**WILLIAM II AND HIS CONSORT**  
**AND SECRET HISTORY OF THE**  
**COURT OF BERLIN**

**FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES**  
**EXTENDING OVER A PERIOD, BEGINNING JUNE, 1888,**  
**TO THE SPRING OF 1898, OF**

**URSULA COUNTESS VON EPPINGHOVEN**  
**DAME DU PALAIS TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS-QUEEN**

**BY**  
**HENRY W. FISCHER**

**VOL. II**

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# THE KAISER

*(Continued)*



## CHAPTER XV

In October, 1892, the Kaiser raised the interdict against *la maudite race de Hohenau* ; the all-highest revel in hunting-castle Grunewald, which led to the succession of horrible anonymous letters mentioned in these papers, took place in the following November, when my mistress, who had given life to Princess Victoria Louise in the middle of September, was not yet in a condition to ride to the hounds or participate in frolics. In vain had Auguste Victoria pleaded that the *soirée* be postponed until she were stronger and able to attend ; "all the invitations were issued ;" "Count Philli could not come at a later time, his duties not permitting him to leave Vienna after the date fixed ;" besides, later on, he, the Emperor, "had to prepare for the formal opening of the Reichstag,"—these and more excuses of the kind silenced Her Majesty.

I had been one of the redcoats at the annual Hubertus hunt in Grunewald on November 3, and my report of the happenings, though strictly truthful, had pleased my mistress. The Countess Hohenau had been there, but rode her horse woman-fashion, and returned, like the other ladies, to Potsdam shortly after the boar was brought down.

"You are sure she did not go back to the chalet to participate in the *Jagd-Diner*, by another route?" inquired Her Majesty.



"I ordered my coachman to keep behind Her Ladyship's carriage, and, though she drove furiously, the command was strictly followed. I saw the Countess's phaeton turn into the court-yard of her villa, and up to eight o'clock to-night she did not leave the house. I have a man there now on watch, according to Your Majesty's orders."

My mistress had grown very red in the face.

"I see your zeal has led you too far," she said, coldly; "but as your friend, Madame von N——, lives near the Hohenaus, drive to her on some pretext and call off your *mouchard*."

Writhing under this undeserved rebuke,—the gratitude of kings,—I was about to say a word that would have tumbled to the ground the cardhouse of self-satisfied assurance, but conquered my passion. Such is life at Court! One has to do things one's womanhood condemns, and is insulted for carrying out the all-highest commands. I had told the truth about Countess Hohenau, but did not tell *all* I observed. If pique had got the better of me, if I had added to my description of the incidents a hint about the graceful courtesy with which Countess Fritz accepted, at the end of the chase, the customary green twig from His Majesty's hand, raised it to her lips, and buried it in her bosom, the whole complexion of social life in the capital for the next two or three years might have been changed, for that knowledge would have wrought the Empress up to such a pitch of passion that, by some decisive step, she would have made it impossible for William to continue in his intrigue. But the courtly usages in which I was brought up compelled me to resist the impulse of anger as well as that of outraged propriety. My mistress never learned the complete, unvarnished story of the Hubertus hunt. "Thou shalt not breathe anything disagreeable," reads the law governing a courtier's life,—"thou shalt not,

even if commanded to do so." Those anecdotes of kings and queens "who want to hear the truth and nothing but the truth" amuse me, for I know better.

At the Hubertus *Jagd-Diner* two hundred and twenty-five covers were laid; the company at the *soirée* two weeks later was much more limited,—five or six ladies and some twenty gentlemen,—among them the Duke of Schleswig, Prince George Radziwill, the Eulenburgs, Philip and Augustus; Generals von Hahnke, von Plessen, and von Scholl, Adjutant von Huelsen, and the Masters of Ceremony, Herr von Kotze and Baron Schrader. Our rubicund friend, Madame von Scholl, did the honors. There were, besides her and Countess Fritz, several friends of Duke Günther, who had not been met in society before. All I know about them is that they responded to the names of French marquises, and wore an astonishing number of lace petticoats.

"Philli never sang better, and Huelsen fairly outdid himself in his capacity as Court jester; those French dames, too, danced enchantingly enough on a marble-top table," says one of the guests; "but His Majesty, though applauding his friends' efforts, seemed absent-minded. During the whole of the evening he sat at the side of Countess Fritz, who was arrayed in a coquettish demi-toilet of white and purple velvet, with barely an excuse for a waist. One of her superb arms, ungloved if you please, leaned upon the Kaiser's *fauteuil*, and His Majesty fondled her hands.

"Toward midnight, Kotze, good-natured fool that he is (if it meant death to him he would still be the best person in the world to intrust with a commission concerning the King's pleasure), Kotze, I said, proposed that all go spook-hunting. '*Mon Dieu!*' cried the French women, 'is there a White Lady about this castle, too?'" And then Duke Günther told the story of the beautiful cannon-founder's wife, whom Margrave Joachim's Princess caused

to be immured on a staircase leading from her husband's room in the first story to the cellar. The cruel deed is said to have occurred about 1545, and the walled-up entrance to the staircase can still be seen. There are even many who think they can hear the poor, starved wench moaning in her centuries' old burial-place. To investigate this latter report, Kotze proposed that we adjourn to the Joachim wing. We did so with many affectations of chicken-heartedness, and when we returned and counted noses, as Günther suggested, there were two missing. His Majesty, you must know, had a sleigh ready all evening, the horses being changed hourly, and as soon as the company left the parlors, the Kaiser and Countess Fritz jumped into this vehicle, and, outriders with torches having been sent ahead, drove on toward Potsdam, Charlotte handling the ribbons. Grand-master Eulenburg was, of course, supposed to know nothing of this, but, being responsible for the Kaiser's person, he had arranged for a second sleigh, with the fastest team from the imperial stables, to follow the other at a moment's notice. Its occupants, an expert driver and a valet, were to keep behind the Kaiser without making their presence known.

"When we learned of these precautionary measures, a load came off our minds," concluded my friend, "and particularly the news that Her Ladyship was driving gave us relief, for everybody remembered the many narrow escapes His Majesty has had when acting as his own coachman."

It is further reported that toward five o'clock in the morning the driver and *Kammerdiener* returned, announcing that "His Majesty was safe." That was all the information given out on the subject. Many tried to learn more of the affair, but as the two men were promoted and removed to other parts of the country shortly afterward, the task proved hopeless.

It all happened on the 17th of the month. Next day, at noon, when the *Kammerdiener* brought in Her Majesty's mail, I noticed among the letters an envelope without initials or seal. This was most unusual. Ordinarily, letters of royalty, and of friends only, are submitted to my mistress in person, Baron Mirbach taking care of all others, as the majority are merely petitions. Examining the envelope still closer, I saw that the ceremonious address was written in Latin letters and in imitation of print. However, despite my misgivings, I had to lay the missive before the Empress. I put the mail on a silver tray and ordered the *Kammerlackai* to carry it into the library, where I preceded him to hand the letters to Her Majesty, who was sitting at her writing-table. By a strange coincidence, the Kaiserin espied the queer envelope at once; while I was giving her the letters with such remarks as "from Her Majesty, Queen Victoria;" "from Her Highness, the Duchess of Glücksburg;" "from Princess Feo;" "from ——" Auguste Victoria interrupted me. "What is in that queer envelope,—the last of the lot?" she inquired.

"I do not know. Some official business, I suppose, sent up by mistake."

"Give it to me, Countess."

And with that impulsiveness that sometimes urges us on to hasten to our doom, Her Majesty tore open the cover. I am not a prude, and have never failed to denounce the bigoted barbarian who cut the head off Correggio's Leda because that young lady looked "too pleased," substituting another of less exuberant expression,<sup>1</sup> but the picture

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<sup>1</sup> This celebrated painting, done in 1530, hangs in the old Museum in Berlin. It was bought by Frederick the Great, during the Seven Years' War, from Prince Louis, son of the Regent of Orleans, who had spoiled the masterpiece, as intimated.

that fell from the envelope was so grossly indecent that I hesitate to even hint at the subject. It represented a scene in the St. Petersburg's ice palace of the eighteenth century, where the great Catherine compelled one of her discarded lovers to spend a night with his mistress. There were two figures, scantily draped in fur robes,—that of a female, bearing on her shoulders the photographed head of Countess Hohenau, and that of a man, exhibiting the Emperor's features.

Her Majesty scanned the abominable caricature with a horrified expression; then, bewildered, disgusted, helpless, she stared at me. I tried to take the picture and letter away from her. "Let me throw these things into the fire," I pleaded, glancing at the door through which the children, with their nurse, might enter at any moment. Instead of answering, Her Majesty got up and went into the anteroom. "*Herr Lück*," she said, in measured tones to the *Kammerdiener* on duty, "send for Countess Brockdorff. I must see Her Excellency at once. I am at home to no one else. The Princes must not come in until after their drive."

Returning, Auguste Victoria drew me down upon the sofa next to her. "Read me that letter," she said, "my eyes hurt." The poor lady was crying.

"Loloki<sup>1</sup> and Lotka on a moonlight night," began the epistle, which purported to tell the incidents of the night at Castle Grunewald, of William's (Loloki's) sleigh-ride with Charlotte (Lotka), Countess Hohenau, and of indescribable orgies in which the pair is supposed to have indulged afterward, in such utterly shameless and revolting language that, after reading aloud the first two lines, I refused to proceed. As, to my great relief, Countess

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<sup>1</sup>"Loloki" is the name of a god of Northern mythology.

Brockdorff entered just then, I handed the pasquinade to her, but, unprepared as Her Excellency was, the introduction upset her. "I beg to be ex——"

"No excuses, please," said Her Majesty; "you will read this letter to the end. I must have it,—word for word."

A stubborn mien had overspread Her Majesty's face. Theresa Brockdorff saw that it would be useless to temporize. She did as she was told. Shades of Queen Bess and Du Barry, of the Duchess of Orleans and Lola Montez! has such language ever issued from a gentlewoman's lips? It was a dreadful ordeal, this reading of anonymous letter number one; and as we were in the midst of it the door opened and in walked the Emperor, deadly pale, holding in his hand an envelope of the same size and similarly inscribed as the one that brought Her Majesty's letter.

Countess Brockdorff and myself rose to withdraw, but the Kaiser stopped us. "Stay," he commanded, "my wife may need you after I have shown her this," and he threw the envelope on the table. Our mistress gave it a frightened look.

"The same as my own!" she gasped. You may imagine the explanations that followed: William's ravings, his vows of vengeance, Auguste Victoria's hysterics, her tears and noble declamations of unshakable trust in her beloved husband's fidelity. "And the best of it was," said the Princess of Meiningen, after things had settled down a bit, "my big brother totally escaped censure for his escapade. In the act of whitewashing him of the terrible accusations, launched forth in the Billingsgate of the medical college mess-room, the facts underlying the whole nefarious business were lost sight of."

So entirely were they forgotten that, indeed, the relations between the Emperor and Countess Hohenau and

his other favorites continued undisturbed for the next two years.

During the time from November, 1892, until the summer of 1894, a thousand and more letters of the character described were delivered at the homes of Berlin and Potsdam uppertendom; from Kaiser to clubman, from the first lady in the land to the last of Court society women, nobody, who was anybody, was spared.

The letters came through the ordinary mail, at all hours of the day and evening, postmarked now from this, now from that quarter of the capital or town, and always announcing their damnable character by the letter style adopted. The carrier that brought them, the lackey or maid receiving them from his hands, recognized the Cain's brand as readily as the quick-witted soubrette taking the note to her trembling mistress, or the Major-domo, the *Kammerherr*, or lady-in-waiting performing that disagreeable duty. As the sodden harlots of Whitechapel were at one time hunted by the merciless Jack and his jack-knife, so were the "noblest of the nation," her head and mistress, at the mercy of a nameless defamer, whose pestiferous arrows spared not the child in his mother's womb, and tore the mask of respectability from the face of graybeards whose youthful indiscretions belonged to the period of the fourth Frederick William.

One fine morning Fräulein von L—— was informed that her fiancée was a Lavallière, but not a liar, "and if you do not understand the phrase, look up its meaning in '*Les Contes Drolatiques*.' " Some racy adventures of the Dowager Princess von S——, that happened before I was born, were detailed in revolting terms to an innocent lad, her Grace's grandson, in his mail delivered at the War Academy, and on the eve of her confirmation, proofs were offered to the daughter of one of the highest functionaries in His

Majesty's service that she was an Austrian rather than a Prussian—on her father's side.

But these were merely side-thrusts, apparently delivered in an attempt to variegate the base of attack and spread consternation among those whose connection with the Court was comparatively remote. When persons of minor renown, like Prince and Princess George Radziwill, the functionaries of the imperial household, Ministers of State and others, who merely aspired to greatness, noblemen and women of the aristocracy trying "to get on" with their Majesties, *viveurs* and high-living dames, tuft-hunting martinets,—when a royal Prince or visiting sovereign received such letters, the missives usually related to affairs of past or momentary consequence; but in the case of the Kaiser and Kaiserin, of Count and Countess Fritz Hohenau, William Hohenau and wife, and Herr and Frau von Kotze, to whom two hundred and ninety of the thousand epistles were addressed, a spirit of persistent persecution was the main characteristic.

That first letter to Her Majesty was quickly followed by a second of the same style and despicable character. Whether the Emperor also had an epistolary visitation at the time, I do not know. Just then the palace was full of visitors, and political agitation kept His Majesty well occupied, so that his family and the household saw little of him except at meal-times, when his conversation was restricted to the Empress, his guests, and the military officials present. It was a tantalizing situation that we of the *entourage* had to face. Our master and mistress had been ambushed, dangerously attacked, and deeply wounded by a person, or persons, eating their bread either day by day or at stated occasions, by a somebody who slept under the same roof with them, or inhabited a palace belonging to the Crown. There could be no alternative. We all felt it; no one



dared dispute it. As Her Majesty said, the slanderer was "one of the official family, or, God save us! Beelzebub himself." Auguste Victoria is very religious, and, like Louis XI, inclines to blame His Satanic Majesty for a good many things.

On the morning of November 17, our little council of war—their Majesties, Countess Brockdorff, and myself—had decided to treat the affair with the most absolute secrecy, and had even formed a sort of quadruple alliance to hunt down the guilty wretch, the Emperor promising to make an example of him or her for all time. But no sooner had the latest *Vehme* dissolved, when its members were informed on all sides that the proposed star-chamber practices would be more than useless. It is easy enough to hide a genealogical tree which in summer affords no shade and in winter no opportunity for hanging one's self; but with a real one, possessing these qualifications to the highest degree, it is quite another matter. To drop metaphor, we learned at luncheon that the affair of the anonymous letters was all over the palace, half a dozen more of the kind received by William and Auguste Victoria having been delivered to members of the household in the course of the morning. At that time the mail-carrier was permitted to leave at the doors of each apartment in the palace the mail addressed to its occupants, so that no one knew what his neighbor got. Nowadays the chief porter intercepts the postman's budget in order to lay the material before His Majesty, if required. Tyrants have ever been opposed to privacy.

That this Russian style of treating privileged communications was introduced at our Court *after* Christmas, 1892, is worthy of consideration. If it had been *en vogue* on the day succeeding the Grunewald revel, the hue and cry raised by the recipients of the anonymous missives would have

been quite a matter of course: it is always judicious to take the bull by the horns. As things were, the voluntary surrender of semi-compromising letters spoke well for the abused parties,—Botho Eulenburg, *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, Count Pückler, Baron von Schrader, and General and Madame von Scholl. At least we, who knew them best, thought so.

The epistles mailed to *Fräulein* von Gersdorff and Frau von Scholl were exact copies of those sent to their Majesties; the gentlemen, too, we learned, had been treated to the same torrent of vile language, the letters being apparently printed from rubber type on some queer writing-machine. Neither did these persons escape the gift of the horrible caricature.

The luncheon had passed off in sullen silence, emphasized by occasional attempts at pleasantry that hardly evoked a response of any sort; but when we reassembled in the *Tussen Zimmer* the long-delayed explanations broke loose, the Empress comparing notes with her lady-in-waiting and Madame von Scholl, and the Emperor with his male co-sufferers, while the rest of us stood about discussing the situation. Suddenly the doors opened and Herr and Frau von Kotze entered.

The Kaiserin's master of ceremony wore his stereotyped smile and *chasséd* about in his usual dandy-like fashion, bowing three times to both their Majesties, though their backs were turned on him, but Madame von Kotze had *rouge* on her cheeks and *noir* under her eyes. After some delay, Adjutant-General von Scholl announced the presence of the pair to William. "Ah, see there,—Leberecht and *gnädige Frau*!" cried the Kaiser; "to what lucky circumstance are we indebted for this unusual pleasure?" But before His Excellency could answer, a lackey entered with a card on a silver tray, which he held out to the grand-master.

Seeing the Kaiser's eyes fixed upon him, Eulenburg handed the pasteboard to His Majesty before he even looked at it himself. William jumped to his feet.

"You must see him at once," he exclaimed; "hear what he has to say, and then report to me!" And as the grand-master went out the Kaiser addressed Herr von Kotze and his adjutants: "Follow me to my study." Then he abruptly left the room.

The *carte de visite* which brought about this unceremonious withdrawal was Fritz Hohenau's, who had come to lay his anonymous letter before Count Eulenburg and thereby indirectly before His Majesty. When the little party arrived in the imperial writing-room, Herr von Kotze, innocent of what was going on, prepared to astonish everybody by a set speech, which he had memorized from his wife's notes on the way to Wildpark station. "May it please Your Majesty to permit —," he began, glancing uneasily at the *entourage*.

"If you are also a victim, out with it, quick!" demanded the Kaiser.

"Poor Leberecht," said General von Scholl, in the evening, "was a picture to behold. At that moment his thoughts probably travelled thrice as fast as they had ever done before. With eyes bulging from his head, he stammered: 'I a victim? A v-i-c-t-i-m?'"

"*Her damit.*"<sup>1</sup> The Kaiser held out his hand with an imperious gesture.

Kotze fumbled nervously in his pocket. "I tremble to show the indecent rag;" "it's entirely unsuitable for Your Majesty's eyes;" "upon my honor, it's too rotten," he kept repeating in a half-remonstrating manner.

"*Her damit, I command you.*" The Kaiser was now fairly beside himself with impatience.

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<sup>1</sup> "Give it to me."

At last the document and picture were deposited on the *secrétaire*, round which the Kaiser and his friends crowded. They were the same as the rest.

"The scoundrel must have struck off a dozen of these pasquils," suggested Count Botho, and William took up the train of thought at once. "Gentlemen," he said, "in hunting down the disgusting poltroon, no infinitesimal detail must be overlooked. When a great crime has been committed, it is Richthofen's practice to put all available men on the trail. So I expect you to go among your friends and find out who received copies of the anonymous communications and who not, the result to be reported to me in strict confidence. Likewise gather every bit of gossip relating to the matter, every opinion concerning it advanced in our own circles and among the people. With such men as you for aids," he concluded, "it would be strange, indeed, if I failed to run down the assailant of our homes."

So the titled *spirri* were let loose to rummage in all clubs, to investigate the mess-rooms, to spy around boudoirs. And the result? All the men and women invited to the *soirée* at Castle Grunewald had received fac-similes of the scurrilous letter, of which altogether from thirty-five to forty copies were distributed. Regarding the author, not a shadow of proof could be obtained.

For this reason the situation at Court grew more awkward day by day. Because no one was accused or accusable, all were suspected, and everybody was on the *qui vive* against everybody else, men as well as women, and the latter in particular. "*Cherchez la femme*" had been the cry of the amateur and professional sleuths from the beginning; for the first letter, as well as those that followed immediately afterward, and, indeed, the majority of anonymous missives received during the next two years, read

like products of a female mind consumed by jealousy and steeped in moral disease.

Like the unspeakable missives of the Vienna, Rome, and Brussels homo-sexual clubs, the letters breathed unrestrained desire for William's person, coupled with fiery hatred for any and every woman crossing his path. That of November 18 tore into shreds the wifely honor of Countess Hohenau; the succeeding one blamed Auguste Victoria for "conspiring to monopolize her husband."

"Do not flatter yourself that the wiles you employ to be forever youthful in the boudoir are your secret alone, imperial Messalina," began this precious document. "Your baths and massages, your tinctures and perfumes,—the meanest scullion in your palace knows their purpose: The Kaiser likes his Venus as she steps from the salubrious deep. But your servants also suspect that this is not the only requirement he imposes upon his charmer. That you hold him so well in hand as you do, and enchain him upon your couch one night out of six all the year round, proves your capability for adaptation," etc.

The above is but a mild and prudish excerpt from the many-paged hailstorm of invectives, and I cannot even suggest the significance of the concluding phrase, which, though in keeping with the whole character of the epistle, is too vile to print, teeming as it does with the sensuality of the brothel and showing in every line the writer's predilection for calling revolting things by the most nauseating terms.

"That's the cloven hoof of the succubus," said the Kaiser, after a consultation with Baron Richthofen; "the female devil always betrays her sex by astonishing profligacy, by an amount of obscenity that is simply beyond man's imagination. Criminal history proves that conclusively."

The pictures or illustrations enclosed in the letters constituted further evidence in support of the above theory. There were, aside from marginal drawings, Paris *pornographia* and Chinese color-prints of a certain kind bearing on their shoulders the photographed heads of the parties assailed, all being of a style and character that answer to the diseased imagination of a female rather than to the lower instincts of a man.

These hypothetical facts were, of course, widely discussed in the palace and in the realms of Court society, and the arguments based upon them went far toward persuading us that the guilty party would be run down. Germans, though always ready to believe in woman's low cunning, put little trust in her acumen.

Suddenly there occurred a change. The type-writer ceased working, and a man's hand took its place. Where nimble fingers, playing on a black-and-white key-board,—*the colors of Prussia!*—had heretofore dealt blows to woman's pride, her ambition, and all her better feelings, an acid pen at the command of a sarcastic and essentially virile brain now essayed to poniard the honor of husbands and wives.

His first victim was the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen, who received in the early part of 1893 an anonymous letter about the alleged misconduct of his wife and her lady-in-waiting, Frau von Berger. The missive contained facts and fancies that were news even to him (Bernhardt has never had too elevated an opinion of his better-half), and made His Highness furious; he began to talk of divorce and other extreme measures.

The same morning my mistress had sent me to the Thiergarten villa to quietly inform Princess Charlotte of the scurrilous note; but that precaution proved quite useless, for I found the august couple embroiled in an animated

discussion of the very facts which I was to communicate. As it turned out, the Empress's letter was merely a copy of Bernhardt's.

"Help me to persuade my wife that a divorce would be the best way to put a stop to these ever-repeated scandals," said the future Duke. "We can base it on dynastic considerations, you know, and I will promise my people that they shall never live under a Biesterfeld<sup>1</sup> if I get another chance."

"You *promise*," scoffed Her Royal Highness,—"*you promise*, and forget that our only daughter was born in 1879! Are you not afraid that *your* people may want to know what *you* have been doing these fourteen years?" With this, "Lottchen" threw herself into a corner of a sofa and indulged in wild laughter. Between the storming Prince and his boisterous wife I had difficulty in maintaining my composure and a show of the respect due them. At last Her Royal Highness sprang to her feet again. Her eyes were aflame and her lips trembled with scorn. "I know what you are reckoning on," she resumed, brushing away a pet dog; "you want to get a Holstein *à la* Auguste, and incidentally trust to the maxim of Louis XV: 'that a smart Princess never runs short of sons.' Very well, Bernhardt the Ruffian, I defy you to imitate Milan the Fat, and I will be a second Nathalie, take my word for it! In conclusion, let me remark that we Hohenzollern women have never been accused of barrenness." Saying this, the Emperor's sister bounced out of the *salon*, and I heard her tell the *Kammerdiener* on duty in the antechamber to order her "horse, her ladies, and her gentlemen."

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<sup>1</sup>The Hereditary Prince having no male heir, the Duchy will fall, after Bernhardt's death, to the sons of his brother Frederick, husband of Adelheid, *Gräfin* von Lippe-Biesterfeld.

Bernhardt threw up both hands. "There you are," he shouted,—“William II, spurs, pants, and the rest! May the devil try to tussle with her. I am off to the barracks.”

“I beg Your Highness’s pardon a thousand times; but what shall I tell my mistress?”

“Nothing,” replied the Prince, gruffly, “or what you d— please,—it is all the same to me.” Let me add here, in parenthesis, that the future ruler of Meiningen is the most picturesque swearer in the German army.

The fact that a man had taken a hand in the game of defamation did not lessen the industry of the original blackguard, who, on the contrary, continued the social crusade with the old-time vigor. (“Social crusade” was the name the anonymous writer had adopted for the unheard-of campaign of home and heart breaking.) But while, at the period of which I am writing, Her Majesty and Countess Fritz were the most frequent targets of the assaults, Her Highness of Meiningen became a prominent object of attack immediately afterward, for a few months at least. Still later, Princess Charlotte having declared that she was not at all annoyed at the missives and pictures, which rather amused her, the scribbler “pinched with hunger for people’s reputation,” saved his postage and photographs for others. From Athens, whither the Meinings travelled after Prince Bernhardt’s temporary retirement from the army, Her Royal Highness sent some poems forwarded to her from Berlin, and which, she said in her note, “were too good to keep.”

I have heard somebody say that the verses are not original. Maybe the rest of the effusions were filched as well. No one but a connoisseur of the worst kind of erotic literature would find it out. The author, or plagiarist, signed himself “Philoanus,” a name that admits of no two meanings, and which was probably employed to



conceal the correspondent's sex. But despite this precaution it was clear that the filthy consignment emanated from a female offender; her ear-marks were apparent in every line of the manuscript, and various interpolated bits of vituperation, typical of the abandoned woman, tended to confirm this suspicion. Mind, I do not want to insinuate that the party alluded to is, or was, a *péripatéticienne*,<sup>1</sup> as they say in the Latin Quarter; there are moral castaways who never deviate from the rules of propriety save in their thoughts or with their pens, and who perhaps for that very reason are the more dangerous,—first, because, like the girl friends of Sappho, they run no physical risks, and, again, because of the contempt they have for the woman who does. Those poems dedicated to the Emperor's sister were veritable cess-pools of depraved taste and perverted sensuality, and I doubt if Henri Quatre would have permitted them to be printed “as truthful reports of existing evils,” as he did Thomas's “*Isle des Hermaphrodites*.”

But, their grossness notwithstanding, Charlotte of Meiningen, as intimated, proved too fond of excitement to lose her temper over the anonymous attentions paid her, and, following this example, Countess Fritz likewise affected indifference to the attacks upon herself after getting over the first fright. That her husband had carried the case to the Kaiser was an obligation the officer owed to the Commander-in-Chief, and that, incidentally (be it said with all deference to an irreproachable character), Hohenau's sense of self-preservation urged him to the action, is not unlikely either. But seeing that the censor of Court morals kept an ear at all key-holes and an eye on our most intimate

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek-French for promenaders, originally relating to the disciples of Aristotle, who delivered their lectures while walking about the pillar halls of the Athens lyceum.

doings, this assumed composure was bound to be noticed by the mysterious correspondent and provoke retaliation on his part.

For a year or so the Kaiser's and the Hohenaus' friends had been annoyed by allusions to the intimacy supposed to exist between Charlotte von der Decken and His Majesty; finally, without warning, the tone changed. "Loloki, thy happy hunting-grounds are being invaded by Baron von R——. What a situation! In thy speech to the Brandenburgers thou promised to smash those opposing thee; 'And if it comes to smashing, I will call upon you,' thou didst say to the carousing guard lieutenants. Now, a guard lieutenant is poaching upon the King's preserves. The smasher-in-chief knocked out by a masher-in-ordinary! And all for a silly harlot!"

His Majesty found this entertaining *billet-doux* in his mail one fine morning, and while he was still contemplating it, General von Hahnke was ushered in. "By order of his Colonel, First Lieutenant Baron von R——, of the Guard Hussars, has deposited this letter with me," drawled "Old Hahnke" in his most sympathetic tones.

The missive read :

"DEAR FRIEND : What's the use of ruining one's self? It is common report that you are playing fifth wheel on Charlotte Hohenau's triumphal chariot. How long do you suppose this can be kept from her crowned lover, who has his spies everywhere? Perhaps you think they are not 'so thick' as before? Believe me, it is but a passing disturbance. To catch a cold on a sleigh ride is quite in the order of things, but there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that a cold does not develop into pneumonia. Therefore, hands off."

The tendency of the two letters and their connection are easily traced. Aside from the sinister purpose of embroiling the war-lord in an undignified quarrel with

one of his officers, the writer was evidently eager to injure Countess Fritz in His Majesty's eyes. How he must hate that beautiful and vivacious little woman! If she were a Lucretia in licentiousness, or a *Gräfin* Cosel in the matter of spending the country's wealth,<sup>1</sup> she could not have evoked more virulent obloquy. After pillorying her as a common adulteress, the merciless traducer scourged her by accusations "in the face of which even innocence might lose courage." This is an extract from a note the Kaiser received in the first week of April, 1894, while staying at Abbazia:

"Lotka—dear grass widow!—complains that you are occasionally untrue to her,—little Prince Oscar is her informant, she says. She questions the children about boudoir secrets whenever she gets a chance."

Here I beg to protest once more that I give only the least offensive instances of the correspondence; if I attempted to stir at all below the surface of the morass, the reader would certainly say I was trying to outdo Rabelais's ring story, which latter, by the way, will never be obsolete at our Court, thanks to the verses Voltaire addressed to Frederick the Great when the latter presented him with a certain jewel.

*"L'anneau de Charle Magne et celui d'Angélique  
Étaient des dons moins précieux,  
Et celui d'Hans Carvel, s'il faut que je m'explique,  
Est le seul, que j'aimasse mieux."*

This pleasantry, though highly enjoyed by Frederick at the time of its delivery, was destined to play a part in the

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<sup>1</sup> Countess Cosel, mistress of Augustus the Strong, ruined the Electorate of Saxony by spending twenty million Thalers wrung from the people's pockets.

famous quarrel of King and philosopher, for later on His Majesty suspected some connection between these lines and the following, which Voltaire addressed to the Margravine of Baireuth (Wilhelmina, Princess of Prussia):

“ Even in the wildest fancies of the mind  
A far, faint gleam of truth we oft may find.  
I dreamed I wore a crown, and oh, my sweet,  
I knelt, a happy lover, at thy feet!  
I woke—yet 'twas not all that passed from me;  
I lost my empire, but lost not thee!”

To return to the Abbazia *billet*. The letter-writer, like “sansculottism accoutred” when it crushed Marie Antoinette, absolutely stopped at nothing in the way of indictments. In the preceding pages I have set down several of the charges brought against poor Countess Fritz, some containing a kernel of veracity, yet a travesty on truth, nevertheless; others, lying accusations on the face of them,—wildly exaggerated all; but if I had any notion to pursue the subject further I should certainly have to borrow the phraseology of Dr. von Krafft-Ebing’s “*Psychopatia sexualis*” and some of the vile language *en vogue* in the prisonwards of the *Salpêtrière*. The writer seemed to have access to a library containing minute descriptions of all the viciousness enacted since the time when Jupiter raped Ganymede, Queen Semiramis made love to a horse, and Cæsar “was regarded as the husband of all wives and the wife of all husbands.” And with this encyclopædia of wickedness at his elbow, he selected to-day one abominable morsel, in a week’s time another, ten days later a third, shaped them into direct and distinct charges, and launched them forth against the unhappy woman in succession.



## CHAPTER XVI

I said, in the preceding chapter, that four hundred of those anonymous communications had been surrendered to the prosecution, headed by the late Baron von Richthofen. That number probably comprised the fifth part of the letters actually distributed. The overwhelming majority of the recipients were ashamed to acknowledge the fact, as the correspondent was in the habit of trotting out old and long-forgotten skeletons, mauling over half-healed sores, and telling of nasty or dishonorable actions, some of them true, others invented. And who would blame a person, so vilely attacked, for giving the poisonous rag to the flames without calling a jury to sit on the contents? No matter how far-fetched a charge, and how conclusive its refutation, some little thing—the shadow of a doubt—always cleaves to the accused innocent. Besides, in matters where family honor is concerned, loyalty, like charity, begins at home. Once, when His Majesty was railing against a friend of his sister Charlotte, who flatly refused to turn over to Baron Richthofen an anonymous letter, I took the liberty of pointing out this maxim to him.

“I know of one loyalty only,—that to the King of Prussia,” was William’s stern rejoinder.

Magnificently said, Your Majesty, but, seeing that the King of Prussia, the present incumbent of the title at least, thinks himself so far above criticism as to be alike invulnerable to calumny and to just accusations, why should his

subjects risk their character to help him to run down a traducer whose power for evil he denies? And again: the correspondence did not always concern the person addressed, but frequently related to the passions, the failings, or the misfortunes of others,—an intimate or an enemy. “It would be a felony to turn this letter over to the police, or even to disclose its contents to *you*,” said my colleague, Countess Bassewitz, one morning when I was in her apartment and the lackey, who had gone to the porter for her mail, brought in one of the abhorred communications. And her little Ladyship threw the thing, scarcely read, into the fire.

I tried to stop her. “His Majesty, who is sure to learn of the arrival of the missive, may ask you for it at luncheon,” I expostulated.

“He cannot, for he has just started on the way to Liebenberg, and if he did, I would resist him, for the letter contained the vilest charge that can be brought against a married woman and her best friend’s husband. And all the parties, all four of them, I count among my closest acquaintances!”

“You dear girl,” I cried, “you speak of the former governor of our Princes and the Meiningen’s *Hofdame*.”

Little Miss Innocence had to sit down; my telepathic performance had so shocked her.

“Major von Falkenhayn and Frau von Berger! What do you know about them?”

“Nothing supernatural, I am sure.” The frightened look on the *Gräfin*’s pretty face amused me. “The fact is, Herr and Frau von Berger’s matrimonial venture proved barren of results until they came to live in Berlin and accepted the Major as *frère et compagnon*,—*Hausfreund* in the broadest sense of the word. Since then the stork has paid annual visits to our colleague.”

"But how do you know?"

"The facts have been disclosed to myself, to Countess and Count von Keller, *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, Herr and Madame von Kotze and the grand-master in the same way as to you, the writer probably expecting that one of us would inform Her Majesty. Being disappointed in us, he or she addressed you. Moreover," I concluded, "the facts are true in every particular. Whether the underlying insinuation is, I cannot tell."

The *anonymus*, as noticed, sometimes told truths with terrible directness; at other times he delivered himself of a *mixtum compositum* of the Simon Pure and of fancies that made it difficult to separate the grain from the chaff; occasionally he would sacrifice a pure girl to his ribald appetite for mischief-making. For instance, that cruel and criminal letter to a young lady about to be confirmed, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, told an unvarnished tale. Her mother was intimate for years with the former Austrian Military Plenipotentiary, Herr von Steininger, and her reputed father was so well aware of it that he allowed the Colonel to refer to the mother of "his" children as "*Unsere Frau*." Steininger's remark to Herr von S——, now dead: "*We* had better look out, Baron, our wife is unfaithful to us. That devil of a Z—— is getting in his fine work," was a *mot* much quoted at Court. And these parties held official and personal relations with their Majesties. But they were not the only courtiers deservedly dragged to the pillory. Indeed, Montesquieu's characterization of society under Louis XIV and Louis XV as "ambition allied to idleness, baseness wedded to haughtiness; as the incarnation of the desire to become rich without work; as lickspittleness; as hatred of truth; traitorship and perfidiousness; as sophism, and contempt for public duties; as fear of virtuous princes, and as interest



in the King's vices,"—this terrible indictment fits our present conditions as if it had been written yesterday, instead of a hundred and fifty years ago. And how could it be otherwise? William's surpassing weaknesses—limitless vanity, despotic inclinations, and unrestrained egotism—are echoes of the "*l'état c'est moi*" and "*après nous le déluge*" theories of centuries ago,—albeit more authentic,—and it is death for a courtier, or for a minister of state, not to cater to these idiosyncrasies. Besides, the German noble and idle classes are not one whit better, in point of morality, than those of England, of France, or Russia. In one respect they are worse, I think: they are, without exception, infinite tattlers. Though flattering myself with the endowment of fair observatory capabilities, and though I keep my eyes open as I go along, Berlin society women, I confess, have frequently astonished me by information concerning my master and mistress that I would never dream of noticing, though the affairs mentioned happened under my very nose. And Kaiser and Kaiserin are as bad as the rest. All memoirs of royalty agree that august personages are impassioned gatherers of small gossip; the two Napoleons, the Alexanders, the great Frederick, Joseph II and Louis XV, the Regents of France and of Great Britain,—all had their Poellnitzes and Fouchés, but inherent craftiness, at the same time, kept them from compromising their own thoughts or the conclusions they drew from the information received. My mistress is perhaps too little sophisticated to follow these examples; besides, being a lonely woman, she feels the necessity of an exchange of thoughts. With the Emperor, it is impulsiveness that gets the better of his dignity all the time. His faculties of conception act like piston-rods driven by a powerful engine,—a *perpetuum mobile*, as it were,—and he can never resist the temptation to inform those around him of the current of his

ideas. When he decides to change an old friend for a new, to dismiss one official or advance another, he wants all the world to know it; he wants to strike terror to, or evoke surprise in, the hearts of the whole people.

In the foregoing the campaign of defamation has been laid at the doors of a duo, a male and female. Undoubtedly two persons of opposite sexes—the female in the lead, so far as actual work was concerned—started the crusade, and to that pair belongs the discredit of having plunged a score of innocent people, among them half-grown boys and girls, into wretchedness; but they did not remain alone in this business long. Their example bred a host of imitators. At the New Year's reception of 1894, one of the party conveying the Empress Frederick's congratulations told me Her Majesty had said that one-half of the Court society was now writing anonymous letters to the other half, and *vice versa*, and for that reason she would never again live in Berlin for any length of time. And that was not merely one of Her Majesty's pungent Britishisms that pass for *mots* in Berlin, but the sober truth. Not only was the number of missives sent out beyond the physical power of two pairs of hands, even admitting that one of them wielded a typewriter with all the paraphernalia of carbons and stylus-pens,—the range of topics touched upon was too varied and comprehensive for any brace of scoundrels to handle. Their Majesties' doings and the carryings on of the Hohehaus and Kotzes were of course public property, so to speak, in our circle; to comment on their actions was easy enough, but that the intimate affairs of the von Müllers, the von Schultzes, and the von Meyers<sup>1</sup> were treated with equal alacrity proved that the passion for epistolary blackguardism

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<sup>1</sup> Names that in Germany are as common as Brown and Smith in English-speaking countries.

had become contagious, and that the Emperor's mother was right, or pretty nearly right. If the genius of Anarchy had started out to destroy the nation's great by carrying discord and hatred into their midst and by setting one powerful family against the other, he could not have assailed the natural opponents of lawlessness with greater prospect of certainty and despatch. But while all suffered under the reign of terror,—the guillotining, the fusillading, and *noy-ading* of reputations,—none underwent crueller torments at the hands of the vilifier than Auguste Victoria and her cousin morganatic. I must admit, though, that Her Majesty's chagrin at the initial letters was not of long duration. Their form, of course, nauseated the woman, and their text wounded the wife in her, but the baseness of the undertaking itself did not seem to impress the sovereign lady, and from the very beginning she was of opinion that the perpetrator would, nay, must, escape. I often had it on my tongue to inquire into the reason for this assumption, but etiquette forbade.

A circumstance that provoked general discussion was the leniency with which the *anonymus* passed by Duke Günther. His "vocabulary of lasciviousness" had been enriched by only three contributions of the letter-writer, he declared, and these he handed to the Kaiser. They were in keeping with the general run, but contained neither references to His Highness's debts, nor to his mistresses, nor to any other ticklish point in his career; in short, to quote the President of Police, they were "suspiciously harmless."

"If I were unmarried, like you, I should be angry at being treated in this milk-and-water style," said George Radziwill to the Duke once.

"I have never thought of that," Günther is reported to have answered,—an expression that created much surprise at the time.

In the beginning of 1894, when hundreds of pens were busy composing scurrilous notes, my mistress received several missives that completely unnerved her, although their contents did not refer to escapades on the part of the Emperor, but, on the other hand, were inventions so stupid as to be almost pitiable. I dare hint at only one of the lot,—a photograph representing a naked female with Her Majesty's face and features, and at her side Court-chaplain Stoecker in *puris naturalibus*, save for his well-known clerical bib. The letter that accompanied this beastly cartoon purported to explain why Charles the Ninth's soldiers called the biggest cannon the French boasted of "*La Reine Mère*."<sup>1</sup>

This reflection upon her platonic friendship for the bigoted and ambitious parson threw my poor mistress into a fever from which she recovered only after a week or ten days, when the Kaiser's silence demonstrated that he had not been treated to a fac-simile of the cartoon. As a matter of fact, though, the copy intended for William had been intercepted by General von Scholl, who, without telling what he knew, persuaded the Empress, in the course of time, to drop Stoecker and forego all interference on his behalf. So the *anonymus* became indirectly responsible for the complete annihilation of the once puissant preacher, whose fall recalls the French definition of the term: "What is courtly policy?" Answer: "To place the King on the *chaise percée* in the morning, and empty it over the head of the retiring Minister of State in the afternoon." From 1894 to 1896, inclusive, the Kaiser, his adjutants, his friends, the aristocracy, the conservatives, and almost the entire press engaged in "rotten-egging"

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<sup>1</sup> The Queen-Mother referred to was Catherine de Medici, notorious for her amorous adventures.

Stoecker, and Auguste Victoria, who ought to have stood by him, kept silent.

Some time after the receipt of the Stoecker picture, on a beautiful March Sunday (the Emperor was absent just then), Princess Louise drove up while my mistress was having her hair dressed for second breakfast.

"Princess Frederick Leopold?" repeated the Empress, when I made the announcement.

"So the *Kammerdiener* reports, Your Majesty."

"Something must have happened at Glienecke! Quick, Countess, go ask my sister's pardon, and beg her to come in here," and, turning to her women, Her Majesty added: "You may retire for the present."

The Kaiser and Frederick Leopold had not been on good terms for some time, and the royal sisters, who, of course, take sides with their husbands, had seen each other at stated occasions only during the past year. This explains my mistress's surmise that something was amiss.

Princess Louise was never handsome, but she looked a fright that morning. Her eyes were red and her face was blotched. "You must send everybody from the room and antechamber before I begin to speak to Her Majesty," she said.

The subject of conversation between the sisters was an anonymous note.

"If you want to know why Frederick Leopold calls you a woman of the second class, consult your mirror when you go to bed to-night, and compare your reflection with the torso I enclose. The photograph was made by your husband—from life. What a charming model 'Lotka' makes! See the sweet abandonment of her figure! behold the slope of her royal shoulders, the firm bosoms! Ah, the von der Decken is not fool enough to suckle her children as you and your sister do. No wonder Frederick Leopold honors her by the title of 'woman of the first class,' etc.

The letter went on to tell "what might happen if 'Loloki' learned of the relations between his mistress and His Royal Highness," and it was this semi-threat that brought Princess Louise to Auguste's feet. She asked her sister nothing more nor less than to ransack His Majesty's mail-bag for a fac-simile of the tell-tale letter (there were always duplicates, you know). This my mistress refused to do. "I cannot believe in the reported intimacy between Willie and Countess Fritz," she said, "and will undertake nothing to either set right or deny the scandalous sur-misal."

When the Kaiser returned next day, it became evident at once that he had a brand new grievance against "Milor of Glienecke," whom he held up to ridicule more than ever, and the ultimate result of it all was Frederick Leopold's appointment to the position of Brigadier of the Fourth Guard Infantry, the decree being issued November 14, on his twenty-ninth birthday. The son of the famous Red Prince reduced to the foot, when he had confidently expected to obtain a command in the cavalry. It was the unkindest cut of all! He had to discard the lovely *Garde-du-Corps* uniform, in which he was wont to outshine His Majesty, and, besides, had to live in Berlin in the future. There was no redress against this, no chance for getting even except in a small, very small way. And this straw the Prince clutched with both hands. During the Emperor's absence on November 15, when we were just sitting down to luncheon, the new General was announced.

My mistress was at first inclined to be angry. I heard her say to Countess Brockdorff: "Why, has my brother-in-law forgotten our meal-hours?" But a second later she ordered her *Kammerherr* to conduct His Royal Highness to the reception-room, where she would see him at once. On the way to the *salon*, however, the sovereign lady

changed her mind, and went to the Shell Hall to intercept Frederick Leopold, if possible. But meanwhile the bird had flown. It happened this way. As soon as the servant had withdrawn to announce him, Frederick Leopold asked the porter whether this was not Her Majesty's luncheon hour.

"At Your Royal Highness's orders,—yes," answered the fat functionary.

The Prince thereupon threw his card into the porter's face with the words: "If that be so, I will not incommode the Kaiserin," and, addressing his coachman, he cried: "*Fort!*" (away!). The driver seemed to have waited for the signal, and, giving his horses whip and rein, started off at breakneck speed. By the time Her Majesty appeared in the vestibule the carriage was approaching Sans Souci.

It was a preconcerted game, of course. Leopold knew the very minute when we should sit down to table. He correctly guessed that Her Majesty would receive him, nevertheless, and, after inducing her to come out and meet him, cried "April-fool," and vamosed with the aid of the excellent horseflesh for which his stable is famous.

But while the highest in the land were pestered, their closest friends did not escape, particularly the women who, as narrated in chapters XIII and XIV, were just then fighting for supremacy in William's affections. Indeed, the letter-writing fiend was responsible for most of the occasional spats between Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze, for he kept each rival posted on the other's triumphs or discomforts. To-day Madame von Kotze was apprised that Fritz Hohenau did not pay for *all* the diamonds his wife wore at the *Grand Cour*, and to-morrow Charlotte had it, on the best of authority, that William was more than Godfather to Her Excellency's infant. And the photographic assaults these pretty ladies suffered!

Countess Fritz as Sporus<sup>1</sup> beloved by Cæsar was one of the milder cartoons. A really funny picture which Madame von Kotze received was in two parts, styled "Various nocturnal adventures in Grunewald." The first division showed the Kaiser and his guest, the King of Saxony, sitting in a coach, gaily lighted by electricity inside and outside. Part second pictured the Emperor as he helped Countess Fritz into a coupé, at the entrance of the forest, and blew out the solitary carriage-lantern before getting in himself.

The letters and pictures addressed to these parties were turned over to Baron von Richthofen, and a royal *auditeur* was especially charged with collecting evidence in the matter, he, like the President of Police, being vested with the power of *inquirendo*. An example of this gentleman's activity and failings was given in Chapter IX. I, for one, have never been able to discover his usefulness, unless a talent for piling up stacks of legal documents counts. Like the *mouchard* of the French-detective story, this worthy was always "on the trail" of the villain, but never approached near enough to lay hands on him, at least not on the right party. Lastly, the Kaiser engaged Herr von Tausch, his own *press-cossack*,<sup>2</sup> to act as *chercheur* under his personal guidance, and to the discretion of this trio the members of the royal family, the *entourage*, and everybody associated with our Court and the highest ministerial circles were delivered up, bound hand and foot, and gagged besides, if you please.

That one's letters were committed to the inquisitorial board was really one of the minor hardships; the oral

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<sup>1</sup> Sporus was a Roman lad whom Nero metamorphosed (as far as possible) into a woman and publicly married.

<sup>2</sup> The German for press-agent.



examinations were odious, though conducted in a dignified manner, but not infrequently part of the evidence became public property, viz.: when Herr von Tausch thought it well to give information to the press, and such bad faith was intolerable. It was this disloyal policy—a freak developed by William's Lombroso studies—that drove so many great families to withdraw from Court. The princely houses of Stolberg and Carolath, the Duke of Sagan, Herr von Tiele-Winckler, the Maltzans, Perponchers, Harrachs and others had no ambition to see their palaces fired so that William might boil a couple of eggs in the ashes of their good name.

For the whole inquiry, strictly speaking, turned on the everlasting theme of "insult to Majesty."

"*Eine Rotte vaterlandsloser Gesellen*" (a band of unpatriotic scoundrels)—His Majesty's favorite term for characterizing his enemies—had dared to carry its intrigues to the steps of the throne (William would never admit that they had invaded his very bedroom); *ergo*, all society must rise to rid him of these nuisances. That the paladins upon whom he called were quite busy defending their own firesides, and were forced to leave their families unprotected while they followed his invitation; that, moreover, by placing their correspondence at his disposal, they jeopardized their wives' and daughters' fair names, their own and their sons' honor,—what mattered that? Somebody had interfered with the master's pleasure; it was in the nature of things that everybody else should suffer. Besides, there had arisen a contingency, the existence of which was suspected by a few in the inner circle only: the authorship of many letters, especially those sent out the first twelve-month, had been traced to a member of the royal family. If one or more of his imitators were brought to bay, the tracks of the original *anonymus* could be covered up for good.

During all this time the intrigues between His Majesty's favorites, females and males, and between the English and anti-English factions at Court, continued, and, naturally, Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze stood in the first battle line. They fought separately and individually. It was a private feud, though, as the husbands of both women were counted Anglomaniacs. A powerful ally of Madame von Kotze was Duke Günther, not because he despised *this* rival of his sister less, but because he hated Countess Fritz more. The Hohenlohes—one of their clan, Marguerite d'Ujest, married William Hohenau—and their numberless cousins and nieces and aunts used their influence against the Kotzes, of course, as the Kaiser's unwillingness to make the Hohenaus Princes of Liegnitz was said to be due to Madame von Kotze's dissuasive arguments. No matter how often Charlotte von der Decken held the arched emblem of pseudo-sovereignty in her grasp after a *tête-à-tête* with the imperial cousin, before the parchment was signed the "Kotze woman" frightened the Emperor into abandoning the project by representing to him the ridiculous figure he would cut by openly acknowledging illicit relations. As for William, he was strictly impartial. Enjoying the good things both Herr von Kotze and the younger Hohenau provided for his delectation, he honored both gentlemen with his distinguished friendship, possibly giving to the Kotze *ménage* the benefit of his company more often than to the other, for purely personal reasons. Kotze, you must know, is the very type of a man after William's heart. In his agile and pleasing presence he combines von Hahnke's suppleness with von Plessen's devotion to duty and von Scholl's *bonhomie*. There probably never was an hour in his life, full of airy nothingnesses, when he would not have risked his soul for the King. He gave his services to the Court gratis, and spent hundreds of

thousands per annum to entertain His Majesty. In short, he lived for the royal master only. I remember meeting him *Unter den Linden* one fine morning, his cousin, Count Haeseler, commander of the Fifteenth Army Corps, being my escort.

"My dear Leberecht," cried the General, after the usual greetings, "why, by all the saints, do you wear a grass-green cravat?"

"You forget, cousin," replied Kotze, with an injured look, "a green cravat is most appropriate to-day. His Majesty went a-hunting this morning."

And all of a sudden it was whispered that this humble servant of the fetich royal,—he who would have worn *couleur de caca de Prince Royal* with as much avidity as *couleur de chasse*,—the amiable *viveur*, distinguished comrade, officer of splendid record for integrity and loyalty,—it was rumored that this man, noted for a certain amount of horse-sense, but an ignoramus on all topics unconnected with the humdrum existence of a man of fashion,—that Kotze, who was no more addicted to the pen than to overalls, was the anonymous graphomaniac for whom we had been searching so long. One fine morning the report was on everybody's lips,—no one knew who first uttered the calumny.

It was Hervey, author of "Memoirs of the Court of George II," who gave form to the truism:

"Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds  
An easy entrance to ignoble minds,"

and he had been a politician and courtier long enough to get to the root of Court intrigues. Exclamations such as: "Pst! Kotze will hear you," "I let it out to Leberecht, it will be in the anonymous letters to-morrow," became all at

once as common at our Court as "Your Majesty," "Your Excellency," or "*gnädigste Gräfin*." Only in the presence of the Kaiser and Kaiserin were the accusers silent, so far as my immediate observation went, at least. Later on I learned that the "mobbing" of Kotze started in William's most intimate circle, and, moreover, that the lying stories affecting his integrity were spread by some of the Kaiser's right-hand men in a clandestine manner. Whether His Majesty sanctioned this or not, personally he kept up a show of most gracious affection for the persecuted, and whenever my mistress hinted at the expediency of dispensing with Herr von Kotze's services, he overruled her cavils by a flood of praise for "loyal Leberecht."

"Why," he said on one of these occasions, "it would be impossible to dismiss him now. I have just reinstated him in the army. As you well know, I like to surround myself with persons of military rank, and, to facilitate this with respect to Leberecht, I made him *Rittmeister z. D.*<sup>1</sup> Besides, think of the scandal his fall would create. He is brother-in-law, cousin, and uncle to half the nobles of the realm,—my *Kammerherr* and my friend."

And four Sundays later, when the whole Court was assembled in the state apartments of the Schloss, awaiting their Majesties, in whose suite we were to attend the formal corner-stone-laying for the new cathedral, General von Hahnke's adjutant appeared unexpectedly in our midst,

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<sup>1</sup> Herr von Kotze left his regiment, the Guard Lancers, some ten years ago with the character of *chef d'Escadron a. D.*, which means "retired." The term *z. D. (sur Disposition)* infers that an officer is still connected with the army, though not in actual service, being, as it were, at the disposition of his superiors, who call upon him when occasion demands. The important point of this is that an officer "*z. D.*" is responsible to the military courts only, while the officer "*a. D.*" is subject to ordinary civil jurisdiction.

and walking up to Auguste Victoria's master of ceremony, invited him to come outside. Taking the captain's entrance for the signal of their Majesties' coming (we had left them in Potsdam that morning), we ladies advanced toward the great staircase, at the head of which we saw Kotze in earnest conversation with the Chief of the Military Cabinet.

"Are you not going?" I whispered, in passing.

"No," he answered, with a strange tremor in his voice; "please make my excuses to Countess Brockdorff; I shall be detained."

Ten minutes later the news spread that, upon receiving proof of Kotze's perfidy by means of a report delivered to him while on the way to Berlin, the Kaiser had signed a warrant for his arrest in the *Fürstenzimmer* of *Potsdamer Bahnhof* and had sent von Hahnke ahead to apprehend the culprit so as to avoid meeting him at the festivities. That these details were correct I learned in the course of the evening from Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, wife of Empress Frederick's Court-marshal. Her Grace had it from her brother Franz, Major in the First Guard Dragoons and one of Kotze's most outspoken enemies.

Prince Franz, a middle-aged bachelor, had sprung into sudden prominence of late,—he and his *ablatus*, Herr von Schrader, the Kaiser's master of ceremony. Baron Schrader, it was soon learned, had denounced his colleague to the investigating board, and finally had brought formal charges against Kotze, submitting them to His Majesty on the morning of the cathedral celebration. General opinion at Court and in society was, of course, against the accused man. I say "of course," for distrust is a plant of rapid growth in an atmosphere where the praise of the lord's doings is one's best recommendation.

Her Majesty professed to be entirely unnerved by the shock; "she would never get over having associated so

long with vile traitors ;" she had had "her misgivings," though. The Kaiser, on his part, struck heroic attitudes. He had "saved society," "thanks to his initiative, the homes of the nation's nobles were once more secure;" and the members of the royal family and the aristocracy hailed the lord-protector ! On Sunday and Monday, *nota bene* !

There was also some sentimental by-play,—Madame von Kotze on her knees before William in the billiard-room of the Neues Palais, while Her Majesty and the children were playing at hide-and-seek in the garden outside. Auguste Victoria had an excellent view of the proceedings : a beautiful but wretched woman imploring her powerful friend's mercy for the husband about to be sacrificed that another might go free ! William proud and adamant, as if he had never leaned upon the beautiful arm raised to him in anguish !

"It is of no use, *gnädige Frau*. Justice must be administered. He shall be treated like any common criminal."

Then a shriek, a fall, and the children cried as if with one voice : "What is papa doing to Auntie Kotze?"

"You *have* no Aunt Kotze," said the imperial mother cruelly, and motioning to the servant, standing at a respectful distance, gave orders that madame's carriage be brought around into the *Sandhof*, the other side of the palace, from where the lady should depart. At the same moment, Adele von Haake emerged from the door-windows of the billiard-room, announcing that the *Ceremonienmeisterin* had rallied and begged to be received by Her Majesty.

"Her Ladyship must apply in writing to my grand-mistress,—tell her that !" And the Empress ran off, followed by the puzzled youngsters.

But while the unhappy wife and favorite drove home toward Berlin (she had not the courage to take the train

for fear of being recognized), her avenger stalked into the palace-yard in the shape of a letter-carrier, bringing missives in the dreaded imitated print for both Kaiser and Kaiserin and many dignitaries. *Anonymus redivivus* paid his compliments to their Majesties and their Excellencies and called them names for being so stupid as to incarcerate such an innocent, a man whom only petty spite or gross incompetency could connect with a crime that called for much ready wit and a dare-devil spirit excusable only "in the highest spheres, if not the all-highest."

"Take my word for it," concluded each epistle, "before three weeks have passed, 'Loloki' will be obliged to open Kotze's prison doors and beg him, by all that is sacred to the royalist, to hold his tongue."

We must now recall some incidents that happened in April, shortly after their Majesties' return from Italy.

Ever since the close of the carnival season when she enjoyed her customary triumphs at the Emperor's side, Charlotte Hohenau had been bombarded by a succession of anonymous letters of the vilest description, but the missives left at her door after the re-establishment of the Court in Potsdam were not only vicious, but ominous to an alarming extent.

"'Loloki's' wife has got the better of you," wrote the mysterious scribe on April 10; "the Emperor will not kiss your arm ten days from now, for you will not be allowed to celebrate your thirty-first birthday in Berlin."

On April 13, after a parade at Tempelhofer Feld, His Majesty ordered Fritz Hohenau, *Rittmeister* of the First Guard Dragoons, to report to him. "I hereby transfer you to Hannover for one year, the order to take effect at once," he addressed Cousin Fritz, in his usual pompous style.

"At your Majesty's orders," replied Hohenau, without moving a muscle. The Kaiser looked at him in astonishment.

He had expected to surprise the *Rittmeister*, to see him chagrined, or at least confused.

"The fact that, hereafter, you will be unable to serve under the war-lord's eye seems to make little impression upon you," he thundered.

"Beg Your Majesty's pardon, but I had a presentiment of what would happen to-day,—a letter that I found in my morning mail."

"Not one of those anonymous rags?"

"Your Majesty has said it."

"I want to speak to my wife. Leave us alone." With these words, the Kaiser entered Her Majesty's library on the afternoon of parade-day, and before Countess Brockdorff, who told me of the occurrence, had time to withdraw, he continued: "Explain, madame, how matters that I confide to you, and to you alone, come to be hawked about by the letter-writing fiend. You fondly imagined Hohenau would be knocked silly by the news of his removal. A fine surprise: he knew all about it." What more was said on that occasion and on that subject I do not know. My mistress was visible to no one but her brother and Countess Brockdorff for the rest of the day, but next morning, when one of the ladies asked to be excused from second breakfast, as she intended to go to Berlin, Her Majesty carelessly remarked: "Then you may go with me and save your fare. The Kaiser told me yesterday he meant to take leave of the Hohenaus this morning, and I am going myself to pay some visits of condolence."

At twelve o'clock I accompanied the Kaiserin to the station. At the entrance stood General von Hahnke, bowing and saluting. "I did not know His Majesty was going away so early, and I must try to intercept him to obtain the all-highest signature for several orders," he said, in his ceremonious manner.



"So, so," nodded the Empress. She had not expected to meet the chief, and was hunting for words, as she always does, when confronted by a thing unusual.

"And I dare say, among my papers is one Your Majesty will heartily approve of," resumed Hahnke, with a lurking expression about his eyes. And as Her Majesty made no immediate answer, he added, lowering his voice: "the shifting of Fritz Hohenau to Hannover."

"Indeed, I heard of it. They had quite a scene about it on Tempelhofer Feld yesterday." The Kaiserin was now at her ease. "Your Excellency will take a seat in my car," she said, "and you, too, Countess, as Bassewitz does not seem to be coming. I must not be left alone with this gay soldier and Madame von Brockdorff." (Countess Bassewitz was the lady who had asked to be excused from luncheon.)

Once seated in the train, Herr von Hahnke became quite talkative, and I am indebted to his conversation for several facts concerning the anonymous letters mentioned in the foregoing pages. On the question of the moment, viz.: who might be the author of the last anonymous letter to the Hohenaus? he speculated long and laboriously.

"Thank God, I knew nothing of the proposed change," he said, in conclusion, "otherwise His Majesty might think me the tattler."

"Absurd!" cried the Empress, with a show of impatience; "but let that pass. What do you think His Majesty is doing in Berlin to-day?"

"As I had the honor to submit, the Kaiser has not been pleased to inform me of his intended trip."

"Then I will turn tale-bearer: at this moment he is probably in the boudoir of Countess Fritz."

"I beg my sovereign lady's pardon a thousand times; not in the *boudoir*?"

"What do you mean? I *command* you." In her excitement my mistress lost control of herself.

"I entreat Your Majesty will not think me guilty of an attempt at humor. Countess Hohenau's boudoir has been closed to everybody, including its mistress, since the recent police raid."

"Police raid?" gasped Auguste Victoria.

"By Herr von Richthofen and Herr von Tausch! After that, it is said, Madame Charlotte locked her boudoir and ever since has been positively afraid to go near the room."

"Tell us all about it, General."

Hahnke's report was very detailed. Here is a summary: Shortly after their Majesties' return from Italy, the police received information that the name of the author of the anonymous letters could be learned from a note in the possession of Countess Hohenau, this note being deposited in a *cassette*, secreted in a large box-chair in Her Ladyship's boudoir. Thereupon the chiefs of the investigating board repaired to the Hohenau *ménage*, and, Her Ladyship being absent, prevailed upon the Count to let them search his wife's room. The informant had told the truth. The letter was found and a name in it.

While the General delivered the concluding sentences, the Kaiserin had grown very pale.

"A name," said Countess Brockdorff, quickly; "it was all a hoax, then," and, assuming a semi-petulant air, she continued: "You should not have raised our hopes so high, General. Her Majesty and we ladies had expected to hear a solution of the mystery, and it was all wind after all."

Von Hahnke merely bowed and smiled.

We had meanwhile arrived in Berlin. Her Majesty and Countess Brockdorff got into one carriage, I into another, and the chief into a third.

As I prepared to take the train for Potsdam in the evening, a footman in the blue and yellow livery of the Schleswig-Holsteins approached. "His Highness invites Your Ladyship to his coupé," he said: "His Highness is going to the Neues Palais." The man conducted me to a first-class apartment, in front of which stood the usual carpeted stairs. I found Duke Günther enveloped in cigarette smoke, discussing the evening papers with his Court-marshal, Herr von Budenbrock.

"*Gnädigste Gräfin*," he cried, "charmed to have your company. Lots of news to tell, though not from these," and he kicked the *Tageblatt* and *Post* under the seat; "they are as empty of real interest as usual."

I made some commonplace reply, and thanked His Highness for his courtesy. "Nonsense," he said, good-naturedly, "the obligation is entirely on my side. I am going to tell you a story which you must repeat to my sister immediately upon your arrival at the palace. You can see her in her dressing-room and I cannot, and I want Her Majesty to be posted before she comes to table."

Then, without preamble, he added: "Do you know what happened when the Kaiser visited the Hohenau this morning? He was in civilian dress, and, to make the surprise complete, rode in a *Droschke*. But, arrived at Bellevue Strasse, he found the servants lining the staircase, and 'Lotka' *en grande tenue*—low corsage, bare arms, diamonds, bouquet and all—awaiting him. The *anonymus*, through the usual channel, had announced this visit, arranged with so much secrecy!"

Let us now revert to the happenings of the June morning that saw Madame von Kotze's deepest humiliation. If the anonymous correspondent, by the letters mailed twenty-four hours after the *Ceremonienmeister's* arrest, had hoped to benefit poor Kotze, this calculation went wide of the mark,

the Kaiser ridiculing what he called "an attempt at impudent bamboozling."

"Pshaw," cried this doughty student of criminology, at dinner, "what a threadbare trick! The last of my '*Schutzmänner*' could have foretold that the guilty one would endeavor to mislead the prosecution by some such means, for, of course, he has an accomplice."

Quick as a dart, Auguste Victoria took up the thread. "That horrible woman! and she asked me for an audience only this morning."

"I did not say that I suspected Madame von Kotze," shouted the Emperor across the table; and I thought better of him for this flash of magnanimity, though his discourteous manner was painful to behold.

In the evening we were treated to an exposition of the "evidence." The late Herr von Schrader reviewed a dozen or more instances where the anonymous letters had referred to affairs known only to Herr von Kotze and one other party, either one of their Majesties or some high functionary.

"If that be the case," whispered the Princess of Meiningen, with whom I was sitting, "why does not William arrest himself or my sweet sister-in-law?" and, addressing the Kaiser, she said: "If knowledge of a certain fact be an element of incrimination, why are not *all* who were in possession of it prosecuted? If Herr von So-and-So spoke to Leberecht about a matter which, some time afterward, was used by the *anonymus*, why must Kotze be the guilty one and not the other?"

"Because," answered William, sarcastically, "your So-and-So left no traces of his felonious doings behind, while Herr von Kotze did." And His Majesty, assisted by an adjutant, produced two blotting-papers which, he said, were found on a desk in the *Adeliges Casino* immediately after Kotze had vacated the seat in front of it. "Look

at these marks," cried William, in a voice pregnant with turgid solemnity; "the impression of the word 'Loloki' in imitated Latin print, the brand we all know to our sorrow. What does Your Royal Highness say now?" he concluded, bowing to his sister.

"That the news is important, if true," answered Princess Charlotte, flippantly, but she added, as if suddenly aware that she had gone too far: "I mean, if it can be proved that Kotze used the blotters."

"He was not only the last, but the only gentleman to sit at the desk on the morning the discovery was made; besides, more blotters, similarly inscribed, were found in Kotze's private office in the Schloss." His Majesty's face beamed with self-complacency while he made this statement. He acted, every inch, the famous barrister summing up an important case.

On the half-dozen pieces of blotting-paper and the hearsay evidence alluded to, the prosecution rested its case before the court-martial which presently assembled to try Kotze; but even this scanty bit of incriminating material was quickly reduced by one-half, the most important half too: the government's expert in hand-writing declared that the supposed impressions were made on the blotters with pen and ink, the letters being placed upside down, presumably in order to mislead. This would have been accepted as *prima-facie* evidence of a conspiracy to ruin the defendant by manufactured evidence in any court of law, but the court-martial thought otherwise. It decided to ignore the blotters, and found Kotze guilty on the hearsay evidence alone.

When the first news of this strange sentence *par ordre de Mufti* reached the military prison in Linden Strasse, where *Rittmeister* von Kotze had been incarcerated for nearly a month, the warden shook his head. "His

Excellency has just departed in a royal coach, accompanied by His Highness the Hereditary Prince" (of Meiningen) "and the Minister of the Royal House, Excellency von Wedell-Piesdorff," he said to Herr von Berger, whom Princess Charlotte, unknown to her husband, had despatched to prepare Leberecht for the sentence, "and His Majesty," continued the warden, "signed the order for his release in person. Here it is,—the all-highest scrawl. I would not take a hundred marks for it."

It all happened on July 5. No sooner had the royal quick-change artiste heard of the probable disposition by the military court, than he decided that the Prussian eagle must soar above the biased judgment of those uniformed toadies. Hence the impromptu decree of release, the royal livery,—a triumphal chariot in this case,—and the order to his most exalted civil representative to fetch Kotze from gaol. The royal house had sinned against him,—the Minister of the royal house must convey the sovereign's regrets.

That the Kaiser would not sanction the court-martial's findings, so evidently the outcome of parasitism, became known at the palace the same evening. He had dropped Lombroso and suddenly began to talk of the King's "most sacred prerogative," that of administering justice without need of professional jurists and judges. "Peter the Great left only one advocate at home when he came to visit my ancestor," he declaimed, "and this one he promised to hang upon his return after witnessing Frederick William's absolute methods. One cannot do this nowadays, but I mean to exercise the precious right of reversing unjust sentences whenever interference is thrust upon me." One of the Kaiser's adjutants characterized this speech "as a continuation of one delivered to Her Majesty. The Kaiserin," he said, "came into the study this morning to offer

some slight objection to the special honors designed for Kotze, but His Majesty cut her short by a rhapsody on the blind goddess. His present declaration is for the benefit of the Schrader-Hohenau-Ratibor coterie. The Kaiser will have no more of their accusations and inventions."

Indeed not; and notice was served to outsiders as well. The *Reichsanzeiger* published a decree, forthwith ordering a new trial by another branch of the army, "the Third Corps." The disowned Guards had to declare Kotze's honor intact, while at the same time the Hannoverian Lancers, to which regiment Baron Schrader belonged, censured the latter for accusing a brother officer. Now followed a series of duels, in which Herr von Kotze alternately maimed his traducers and was maimed himself, culminating in the famous Schrader-Kotze combat that left His Majesty's informant on the field, a dead man.

During all that time, and up to this very day, the Kotzes did not come to Court, though formally invited as of old: Madame von Kotze could never get over that brutal scene in the billiard-room,—“never, *jamais*, and if I live a hundred years.” And William's little attentions—the sending of Easter eggs, of bottles of Steinberger Cabinet, of photographs, all duly advertised in the newspapers—worked no change in this attitude of proud unapproachableness. “She demands not only public avowal of her husband's innocence on your part, but that the real culprit's name be divulged, as that seems to be the only way of punishing him!” The above is the ever-recurring refrain of Princess Charlotte's correspondence with the Emperor, “Mrs. Meiningen” having charge of the *rapprochement* proceedings and conducting them with great tact and kindness. A staunch friend was Her Royal Highness to the Kotzes all through their prosecution. She kept open house for them in town and out during their sorest trials, and in every

respect treated the Treskow without the "c" as one loving sister should another.

"I am only doing my duty," I heard her say to Her Majesty, when the latter upbraided her for having received the *Ceremonienmeisterin* on the day of the Schrader duel. "I believe in justice, though I never talk about it, and in practising Christianity even if I have no money for churches."

The Kaiser endeavored to give the conversation a humorous turn. "You two remind me of that new play by Sardou," he said,—"*Madame Sans-Gêne*, which represents Napoleon's sisters and sisters-in-law forever assailing each other and quarrelling."

"If I were a bishop's wife, I should be less irritable, I am sure," laughed Her Royal Highness.

"Do not remind me of my office of *summus episcopus*," cried William; "it brings Stoecker to my mind, and I want to forget all about that bigoted *Pfaff*. He is a troublesome subject."

"If he is such a nuisance, why do you not unfrock him? you refrocked Leberecht when it suited you ——" At this moment, Countess Brockdorff, after exchanging a look with Her Majesty, got up and left the room, and I followed.

This refrocking of Leberecht half solves the anonymous letter mystery. It occurred, as stated, some time after their Majesties had returned from Abbazia in company of Duke Günther, and when the anonymous communications, especially those sent to Countess Fritz, made a specialty of divulging secrets of the imperial boudoir, of decisions arrived at or topics discussed in the privacy of *l'île-à-l'île* between their Majesties. It is also worth knowing that, at the period mentioned, William and Günther were on extraordinarily good terms, while the Empress, who had been deprived of her brother's society for a year or longer, passed many



hours with him day by day. Günther, you know, left the country in the spring of 1893 under a cloud, a cloud formed by the smoke of burned stationery; namely, a gross or so of anonymous letters of the style described, and the authorship of which had been traced to His Highness by *Herren* von Richthofen and von Tausch. Then the Empress had come forward, offering to send her brother around the world on condition that those incriminating letters be turned over to her. They were—after they had been photographed.

And now this hopeful ne'er-do-well, after many promises of reform, had come back, and almost simultaneously recommenced the exploitation of the Kaiser and Kaiserin's most intimate sayings and doings, such as exchanges of confidences and of promises affecting the official status of certain persons. The letters saying that Countess Fritz would not celebrate her thirty-first birthday in Berlin, that Hohenau would be removed to Hannover, and, last but not least, that the Emperor would visit Her Ladyship on a certain morning, were specimens of the kind. We have the Kaiser's word for it, that the first two statements were based on disclosures made to Her Majesty, and to her alone, and that William's proposed visit to Charlotte von der Decken was kept a secret is evident from General von Hahnke's words. To the Empress alone William divulged his intention, probably with a view of adding to her discomfort. Thereupon, as reported in these papers, Her Majesty locked herself in her room and saw no one but her brother and her grand-mistress for the rest of the day and evening.

Rejecting even the possibility of Countess Brockdorff's participation in the intrigue, suspicion points directly to Duke Günther as the *anonymus*. He was imperial Auguste Victoria's only *confident*, kept her posted about all the Kaiser's carryings on, and on his part examined into the

minutest details of the royal couple's lives in order to trim his sails according to the wind. Moreover, the reader will remember the conversation I had with His Highness on the train. When, some time later, I mentioned the subject to Herr von Richthofen, he exclaimed at once: "He is at his old tricks again," and then added: "Upon my word, *gnädigste Gräfin*, I wish you had not told me of your adventure." And that remark of Günther's to George Radziwill: "I never thought of that" (namely, that a rake like himself deserved more compromising letters than he received), offers food for reflection, incriminatory reflection, as pointed out once before. To complete the chain of circumstantial evidence, it is but necessary to recall His Highness's enmity to the Hohenaus, his love of gossip, his long-standing secret opposition to the Kaiser, and his violent partisanship for his sister, the Empress.

There are hundreds eating the Kaiser's bread, or visiting the palace, who, in their heart of hearts, hold my mistress equally guilty with her brother,—the late Herr von Richthofen was one of them,—but it gives me pleasure to report that, sifting and resifting the evidence, I failed to discover a single compromising circumstance substantiating that charge. Neither was Auguste Victoria an accessory before the fact, as is frequently hinted at in Court society, though her share in the intrigue was both active and passive: her complaints of William's infidelities gave the first impetus to the persecution of Countess Fritz, Madame von Kotze, and others, and her tattling habits furnished, innocently enough perhaps, ammunition for most of the pestiferous bombs.

That the Kaiser can keep nothing to himself has been already stated, also that he is in the habit of speaking ill of women, and that his adjutants and friends keep him posted in all matters of gossip, the freshest in the market.

William, then, supplied Auguste Victoria with all the scandals going, adding his personal observations and an outline of his intentions and decisions; the Kaiserin furnished the news to Günther, and Günther, not to be outdone, related to his sister the small talk about William and his favorites. The ducal store-house of both Majesties' secrets finally utilized them for his own purpose: to annoy his sister's rivals and to play tricks on His Majesty. And if there was a surplus, he disposed of it where it would do the most harm: among the intriguers so plentiful in the idle classes.

The first batch of anonymous letters was intended by His Highness as a sort of ante-carnival joke after the revel in Castle Grunewald, but, seeing he hit the bull's-eye, he fired another, a third, a fourth, ten, twenty, a hundred shots in quick succession, all the time persuading himself that he was working in the interest of his much-abused sister. Then imitators arose, first a few, later on a host of them, until, in the end, "one-half of Berlin society was writing scurrilous notes to the other." Ultimately the Duke had to "absquatulate," or, to use a less high-sounding term, had to take leg-bail, and Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze enjoyed a brief spell of freedom from what seemed to be a perennial annoyance, though there were plenty of good friends left to give them an occasional dig. When His Highness had run to the end of his Cook's ticket, the old game started anew, the letter alleging that Countess Hohenau had interrogated the Kaiser's children about happenings in the imperial bed-chamber having set the ball rolling.

I confess that it took me quite a long while to get to the bottom of the intrigue; that some such solution would be forthcoming I had suspected from the beginning, and even if I had been royalty's most trusting toady, the evidence accumulating before my eyes on the one hand, and various

hints of my friend, the Princess of Meiningen, on the other, would have disillusioned me.

But when proofs of Günther's implication were so abundant, could the Emperor possibly remain non-cognizant of the facts? No, indeed! but as there were other guilty ones besides Günther, and as numbers meant safety in this case, William clutched most readily at the seam-rent evidence presented against the *Ceremonienmeister*. "What you say looks very probable," he told Baron Schrader, according to Princess Charlotte's story; "continue in your watchfulness and collect all additional proofs obtainable. As soon as anything in the line of direct evidence presents itself, we will seize the scoundrel."

Those bound upon poor Kotze's destruction then went to manufacture proofs in the shape of the "Loloki" blotters, and the Emperor, magnanimous being, gave Kotze back his uniform. "If Leberecht is the author of some of the anonymous letters," he calculated, "the star-chamber is the place to discuss his crime and, if need be, that of his partner or partners. No matter whom he may incriminate before the court-martial, no one outside the officers acting as judges will be the wiser."

At his trial, loyal Leberecht did not breathe a word of what he knew against Günther, denying, moreover, when directly questioned, that he had ever suspected the royal black sheep.

And now our modern Vicar of Bray turned "Papist—Jesuit!" Changed conditions called for a reiteration of the old faith: Kotze had been grievously wronged; His Majesty had never thought him guilty; his accusers had been misled or, worse still, misleading. Down with them, and shame on the biased judges!

But, at the same time, His Majesty would not let the real culprit escape. Madame la Marquise de Villemonble, who claimed to be a great-granddaughter of some Duc

d'Orleans and a Mademoiselle Florence, had been Duke Günther's amanuensis, putting the pepper and salt, the mustard and cress, into the letters. She was forthwith conducted to the frontier by two trusted members of the political police and warned never to show her face again in Berlin. This piquant little woman had been devoted to the Duke for two years, and had often helped to entertain His Majesty,—we met her once shuffling her lace petticoats above a centre-table in Castle Grunewald,—but now all her protests went for naught. As to His Highness, he was given to understand that he would not be tolerated in Berlin or Potsdam for more than a week at a time. The Emperor would not allow him to open a new establishment in the capital or neighborhood, and threatened to turn him adrift if he disobeyed.

The mystery as to who accused Günther in letters addressed to Countess Hohenau and the police has remained as unfathomable as that respecting the identity of the falsifiers of the "Loloki" blotters. Many think the Princess of Meiningen indited those epistles, but whether there is for this surmised more substantial evidence than Her Highness's partisanship I am unable to say. An old friend of Empress Frederick suggests that the balance of inferential proofs inclines to Charlotte as much as to the police, who may have employed this method in preference to advising the Emperor directly of his brother-in-law's repeated offence. The Hohenzollerns have always been mischief-makers, privately as well as politically, and that trick of the *anonymus* to affix the heads of persons to be lampooned to lay-figures in disgusting attitudes is but an old idea borrowed from the Sans Souci archives, which report that Frederick the Great ordered scenes painted from the lascivious volume *Thérèse Philosophe*,<sup>1</sup> the *dramatis personæ*

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<sup>1</sup> The authorship of this vile book has been imputed alternately to the King and to Voltaire.

to be likenesses of his friend d'Argens and the latter's wife, the former dancer Cochois. To both these persons the caricatures imputed the most loathsome unnatural crimes. These pictures were smuggled into d'Argens's bedroom and hung upon the walls during the couple's absence. The same evening, when the unsuspecting philosopher and his innocent better-half were preparing to retire by the light of a wee taper, the King and his friends suddenly rushed in upon them, each armed with a candelabrum, thereby lighting up the room to perfection and disclosing its strange decorations, which Frederick insisted had been in the place ever since d'Argens's wedding night, and, indeed, formed part and parcel of his conjugal outfit.

As to the Prussian police, anonymous letter-writing and letter-stealing have figured largely in its history. Under Frederick William IV, it was a toss-up whether the President of Police, von Hinckeldey, or the Prime Minister, Baron Manteuffel, was the most expert mail-bag rifler and slanderer by means of clandestine correspondence. These two worthies even went so far as to employ *mouchards* to steal letters from the King's desk and pockets. One of the documents so secured was a letter from Czar Nicholas, written in August, 1855, in which he said that he would be able to hold Sebastopol if the besiegers were not too hard on Fort Malakoff, the city's only weak point.

A Prussian policeman sold this invaluable information to one of Napoleon's agents within three days of the receipt of the letter, whereupon the French, on September 8, assailed Malakoff, stormed it, and put an end to the war of the Crimea.

This excursion into history, though seemingly far-fetched, must not be underestimated, for, now that the originator of the anonymous letter scandal and his accessories have either been silenced, neutralized, or dispersed, the historic facts

related offer the only lucid explanation for the continuance of the nuisance. The poisonous rags ceased coming for a short span of time toward the end of 1894, but the Kaiser's intended holiday present to Uncle Chlodwig from the "Disposition Fund" roused the *anonymus* to renewed activity during the Christmas season of that year, and he has kept it up ever since. To mention a recent date, it was that same scribbling fiend who forced Ambassador Herbette to retire from Berlin in 1896 by reports of alleged intimate relations between William and Madame l'Ambassadrice.

## CHAPTER XVII

In a preceding chapter I invited the reader to witness the taking off of a Minister,—Botho Eulenburg losing the Chancellorship because William had to forego his accustomed bath of blood—hare's blood—(at Liebenberg, October 23, 1894), and while on the subject I will add, incidentally, what I omitted to state in my earlier reference; namely, that Count Botho and the war-lord indulged in a violent quarrel on that occasion. The then Prussian Premier seems to have followed His Majesty, when William ran away from the hunting-field, and tried to keep him from going to bed by opening up a conversation on politics. William listened morosely, until Botho, in an effort to improve the all-highest temper, began to demonstrate his well-known ideas about a suspension of the constitution,—government by royal decree. This is William's *beau ideal* of kingship, and the Kaiser had repeatedly upheld His Excellency's views on the subject in the state council as well as privately and before a roomful of people in the palace, but under the circumstances he chose to consider the Premier's suggestions as mere bids for office.

"You forget," he said, icily, "that since the days of the great Frederick, Prussia has trebled in size and population and that the imperial diadem largely adds to the King's burden. *I cannot do everything myself.*"



Under the lash of this remark the Premier paled. "Your Majesty led me to believe that you placed some slight trust in my abilities," he said.

"I never opined that you were a Bismarck, and nothing in your past career convinces me that you are," cried the Emperor, stamping his foot impatiently. "And now," he continued, "with your permission, His Majesty will go to his room."

Philip Eulenburg advanced to conduct him, but the Kaiser motioned him aside. "It is your cousin's place. Send for my grand-master!" and as the latter was not on hand, he insisted upon going unattended.

Botho was beside himself with rage, and bitterly reproached his relatives for enticing him to this meeting. On the spur of the moment he wrote out his resignation, but found the Kaiser in a temporizing mood next morning.

In similar manner the retirement of other ministers of state has been allowed to take place. The majority went out after a row, like wronged menials in a badly-managed household. Indeed, the Kaiser looks upon them as servants and not only through his divine-right spectacles. From Chancellor to the last of the Secretaries, he treats them as *Handlanger*.<sup>1</sup>

Almost every day, when the Kaiser is at home, we hear this sort of dialogue at table :

Her Majesty to the Emperor : "You are going to Berlin" (or Potsdam) "to-morrow?"

His Majesty : "Exactly so." (*Ironically*) "You saw that in the calendar?"

The Empress : "Yes, but I thought Uncle Chlodwig" (or Herr Miquel) "was coming with his report."

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<sup>1</sup> "Unskilled help." In 1897 William designated Bismarck as having been his grandfather's *Handlanger*.

Kaiser: "I ordered him to meet me at Wildpark" (or some Berlin station) "at 7 A.M., so that he may read his paper to me on the cars."

And Prince Hohenlohe is seventy-eight years old, while none of his colleagues is below threescore. What limitless egotism, what contempt for the feelings of others, such an order involves! In December, 1895, the Kaiser invited the Chancellor to come to Potsdam at an unearthly hour to attend him on a trip to Spandau, where he proposed to exercise some regiments on snow-shoes. While breakfasting in his train, His Majesty would be pleased to listen to an epitome of the leading questions of the day delivered by his venerable relative, who is old enough to be his grandfather.

"*Madame la Princesse* is awaiting Your Majesty in the saloon-car," reported Count Pückler, at that time imperial travelling-marshal, at the entrance of the station.

"Princess Hohenlohe?" said the Kaiser, hastening his step. "Can my Chancellor be ill? That would be very awkward just now." He repeated the first part of the question when he shook Her Grace's hand half a minute later.

"Ill? No, thank God, he is asleep," replied Princess Marie, who had just returned from one of her Russian bear-stalking expeditions. This resolute lady (since dead) was then sixty-six years of age.

"*Asleep* when his Emperor had commanded him to be by his side?"

"Tut, tut, *Monsieur le neveu!*" Her Grace no longer smiled. "You have not forgotten the conditions under which the Prince lent his services, I hope? The first of them is that his rank and age be respected. The telegram calling him—a man of seventy-five—to Potsdam at 7 A.M. in midwinter appeared so little in consonance with the

agreement that I thought it bungled in transmission. His Majesty merely meant to ask Chlodwig to have the paper in Potsdam early in the morning, I calculated, and so I brought it to you. It is all right, is it not?"

What could the Kaiser do but put on a good face? "I am sure my gracious aunt always is," he replied, "though these proceedings are unusual, of course, and discipline, you know ——"

"You are joking, William. Such considerations held good with Herr von Caprivi. They are odious among equals. Now will you relieve me of this document?"

"I am a thousand times obliged, *ma tante*" (the Kaiser raised his voice for the benefit of his adjutants, who had remained at the door), "and" (speaking still louder) "I am sorry to hear that Uncle Chlodwig is not well. Moltke will attend you to the palace, and I hope to find you there at dinner. *Au revoir*—we have kept the train waiting long enough. Dona will be charmed to see you."

The Empress was indeed glad, especially when she learned that the meeting with "Willie" had passed off so well. I have the minutes of the conversation from Her Majesty, on whom, by the way, the sarcasm of Her Grace as well as the forced courtesy that characterized the Emperor's remarks were lost.

The Hohenlohes can do these things, of course, but a Miquel, Schoenstedt, Thielmann, a Hammerstein and the rest, have to obey the most outrageous demands unless prepared to be bounced like drunken valets. In winter the gentlemen must be at His Majesty's disposal from 7 A.M. till 12 midnight: in summer he often invites them to report as early as half-past five or six o'clock. If the command appoints the time of the third cock's crow, the poor Excellency has to get up between four and five in the morning, as he must be in grand costume, gold-embroidered

coat, hung with orders and decorations, silk stockings, pumps, knickerbockers and sword, for it takes a good hour to get to Wildpark station.

This is not a daily exercise, of course, for His Majesty likes his sleep as well as any other man; he keeps such early hours only after returning from long journeys, or when pleasure and military exercises make excessive demands upon his time; but even as an exceptional occurrence it is pretty hard on old gentlemen, used to regular hours and overburdened with business.

But if not wanted at 6 or 7 A.M., the Crown's foremost councillors are liable to be dragged from their work, their family circle, or their *siesta* at any other time of the day or evening; they can never call a single hour their own, seeing that William, who regards a report on matters of the highest political significance as a mere *entremets*, to be hastily swallowed between courses of pleasure, or in the intervals of a tattoo, sends for his dignitaries wherever and whenever he finds himself at leisure or in need of some new excitement. The Chief of the Civil Cabinet, Herr von Lucanus, has told me that fully one-half of all ministerial reports are delivered on railway trains, or in the waiting-rooms of stations. "Part of the other half," he said, "is heard by His Majesty in his carriage; after others, he goes himself, making impromptu calls now at the War office, again at the chancellery, or at the Ministry of the Interior."

Herr von Hahnke has regular days for reporting, and he being his right-hand man in all military matters, the Kaiser himself regards the old General's lectures as *quasi* essential, but that notwithstanding, His Excellency has to fight for every thirty minutes of intercourse with His Majesty, just as if he laid claim to time not previously spoken for. If the Kaiser is travelling and Hahnke is in attendance, the

latter delivers his reports at any opportune hour: while William is in his tub, before he gets up in the morning, or after he has retired. If for some reason or other Hahnke is not of the party, he must communicate with the adjutant *du jour* day by day as to the proper time to run up to Hubertusstock, Rominton, Kiel, or other places to perform his duty.

Those are trying days for Prussian and German Secretaries of State, when, as Leberecht Kotze remarked, "it is most appropriate to wear a grass-green cravat." The palace cronies say: "A minister who likes his job will keep an ear to the telephone, one eye upon the clock, and another upon the time-table," when His Majesty hunts in the immediate neighborhood of the Neues Palais, for, if the weather turns out unexpectedly cold, or if His Majesty has the earache, as is frequently the case in winter, he will abandon the chase, and, nothing else being on hand, devote the time to work. Over the wires fly the words: "His Majesty commands Herr Miquel" (Herr *von* Miquel now), "Graf von Posadowsky," "the Minister of Agriculture," or "of Railways," to be at the Neues Palais at a given hour. Or a ring at the 'phone, and the momentous "*Ich befehle*" (the courteous phrase with which William opens every conversation over the wire) throws the state offices on Wilhelm Strasse and Unter den Linden into momentary confusion.

And when their Excellencies, often four or five of them, and the secretaries bearing the *portfeuilles*, arrive at Wildpark, the royal coachman frequently reports that His Majesty has meanwhile changed his mind a second time and has taken to the field, expecting to return in two or four or maybe six or eight hours. So the busy gentlemen trot home again, sometimes to be recalled from Berlin shortly afterward. In the winter of 1896 this happened twice to

Herr von Miquel, busiest of mortals. But, though mighty uncomfortable, it is not the most dreaded experience yet;—the worst infliction is an invitation to accompany His Majesty from the theatre, or some banquet, after ten or eleven o'clock at night, and deliver a lecture on the cars while he softly snores approval.

On such occasions the Emperor usually wakes up as the train comes to a standstill, and, rubbing his eyes, says: "I am entirely satisfied with your proposition, go ahead and press the matter according to the suggestions made;" or, when rising in bad humor: "Leave your report with my adjutant. He shall go over it and submit its salient points anew. Decision will be rendered when I come back from —. Good-night."

Then he steps glibly into his carriage, and the Minister may retire to the waiting-room to sit down for two or three hours till the night express takes him home.

Occasionally, too, the Kaiser invites himself to supper at one of his Minister's, giving the victim half an hour's time to prepare for his reception, and informing him that he has "commanded" so and so many other gentlemen to be present. One of these invitations I especially remember. It took place on January 23, 1892, while we were all busy preparing for the reception of their Majesties of Würtemberg, set for the next day. On that evening, Countess Keller and myself attended our mistress in the great dressing-room at the Berlin Schloss, trying on a new gown for the projected banquet, and I was about to withdraw when the Kaiser came in to say that he would not be home for supper. "I have commanded Miquel," (Dr.) "Bender," (Baron) "Manteuffel," (von) "Helldorf, and" (Graf) "Douglas to meet me at" (Graf) "Zedlitz's in about thirty minutes," he said. "I want to give them my views on the opposition to the *Volksschulgesetz* and hear

what they have to say. At the same time I will order Miquel to promise me to remain in office. His offer of resignation I have declined, at all events."

"Indeed," sighed the Empress. Her Majesty hated Miquel as the most formidable foe of the pious measure among office-holders.

When, fifteen minutes later, I drove down the Linden, I found that grand thoroughfare alive with people. The chasseurs and grooms, riding in all directions to drum together His Majesty's evening party from palaces, hotels, and apartment-houses, had alarmed the town in the neighborhood of the Schloss, and as my coupé stopped at the Bristol,<sup>1</sup> the mob, recognizing the royal livery, burst into cheers, which, however, gave way to "Ohs" and "Pshaws" when my nonentity, instead of the monarch's august person, hove into actual vision. In front of Count Zedlitz's palace stood at least a dozen policemen, and mounted *Schutzmänner* were riding up and down the left side of the avenue.

I stepped briskly into the hotel, and had no sooner reached my friend's room, when deafening sounds of "Hochs" and "Hurrahs" called both of us to the window.

There was His Majesty in a splendid victoria, a new gray overcoat thrown over his General's uniform, the shining helmet adding to his height. "See how he struts and bids for adulation. He reminds me ——"

I caught my friend, once a *Hofdame* to Queen Marie of Bavaria, by the arm. "Pst! these hotel walls have ears."

Next day the Württembergers arrived. Parades, processions, receptions, and in the evening a gala performance

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<sup>1</sup> Next door to the Ministry of Cult.

at the Opera House. During the principal intermission, tea was served to their Majesties and the ladies and gentlemen of the Court in the *salons* adjoining the royal box.

"These festivities, I trust, do not keep you from your work, William?" the King of Württemberg was heard to say, as he and the Kaiser retired into an alcove to puff a cigarette.

"Not at all. I settled beforehand the business liable to interfere with my enjoyment of your society."

"Not the *Volksschulgesetz*?"

"The very same. Last night I gave the ultra-Christians to understand that I shall go with the majority."

"But Zedlitz? It means his ruin."

"Fiddlesticks!" laughed the Kaiser; "he perishes in his King's service. Can a Minister die a more beautiful death?"

When, after the performance, he had retired to his study to go over despatches a courier from Stuttgart had brought, the Suabian Majesty said to Captain Bieler, his adjutant: "Every conversation I have with the Kaiser heightens my conviction that he is drifting toward the natural outcome of the exaltation of the almighty ego,—monomania of pride or grandeur. Here is this Zedlitz, on whom he and the Kaiserin have doted so much, and who drew up the new *Volksschulgesetz* after His Majesty's dictation. To-night my cousin informs me that he has thrown him overboard, disowned him and his bill, and when I expressed some slight compassion for the poor fellow, he said, in substance: '*Dulce et decorum est pro rege mori!*' Why, Ludwig never went further."

I am obliged, for the report of this conversation, to my friend at the Bristol, who happens to be a near relative of one of the gentlemen in the Württembergers' suite. In the utterance nothing surprised me more than the allusion to the suicide of Lake Starnberg, and I said so. The Baroness took me up rather sharply. "I reported the King's words,"



was her piqued retort, "and if they coincide with my own views, so much more credit to woman's acumen. I have not acted *souffleuse* to *König* Wilhelm, I assure you."

I perceived the Baroness was angered by those doubts of mine, born out of a half-hearted attempt to disbelieve what came so near the truth. To humor her, I asked her about the hapless son of her late mistress. At first Her Ladyship refused on the plea of "sparing my patriotic feelings," but consented after a while.

"I was never more struck by the likeness the Kaiser bears to the late Ludwig in manners and attitude," she said, "than when I saw him alight from his carriage a few evenings ago, and I was going to remark something of that sort when you stopped me: the same *grandezza* of walk and gesture, the same studied pose of the head, face and eyes, signifying deep thought, evidently with the intention of impressing the multitude; the resemblance is as extraordinary as it is painful to me."

"Permit me," I said, "there is no gainsaying that our Kaiser is theatrical, but to liken him to a maniac on that account is going too far."

"Pray do not misunderstand me, Countess," said the lady from Munich, "I do not judge the Emperor by exterior signs alone: I take the manifestations of his inner life, his relations to his mother, to his officials, and to his people, his government, his attitude toward and his contributions to art, literature, and what not, into consideration as well. And judging him from every conceivable standpoint, I say and repeat: William II reminds me exceedingly of his late cousin Ludwig. To return to the spectacle witnessed from my window: with just such affectation of dignity was the King of Bavaria wont to walk in state processions, or on other public occasions, during the latter half of the seventies, not to speak of the last years of his life, when his

dementia had become acute. Then the common horde shouted: 'Ah, every inch a King!' just as they do now in Berlin, but those capable of seeing below the surface, and professional men generally, shook their heads and talked of megalomania."

Under stress of these reminiscences I had to confess to myself that, as intimated in these volumes, the Kaiser's actions had often struck me as emanating from a mind not untainted by hereditary disease and not unaffected by prurient egomania.

"My poor mistress!" sighed the former maid of honor to Queen Marie, "what a blessing she did not live to see her grandnephew on the road to destruction! Though she had become a thorough Bavarian, the glory of the Hohenzollerns was forever in her pious mind. Indeed, the holy fervor with which Her Majesty embraced religion during the last fifteen years of her life had its origin in the all-consuming fear that the rise of Prussia's Kings after the French war might have in it the germ of intellectual and moral disaster."

From a diary she kept at Hohenschwangau during the residence of the Queen-Mother there, the Baroness read to me this pathetic appeal, which, she said, was her late mistress's daily prayer:

"If it be true, O Lord, that I was the instrument to visit Thy wrath upon the house of Wittelsbach by transmitting the seed of insanity of my male ancestors, let Thy anger be appeased. In the person of Thy servant Frederick William IV, Thou hast taught the proud Hohenzollerns the transiency of earthly power; the sorry fate of my own sons will forever keep before the royal house of Bavaria the awful punishment excessive pride suffers at Thy hands. May the pious lives of Frederick William's successor and my son's administrator atone for past sins, and may the Wittelsbachs and Hohenzollerns of the future be wise, humble, and God-fearing men."

"Her Majesty then concurred in the opinion of the medical authorities: that her sons inherited the insanity of the Hohenzollerns through her?"

"Indeed she did, poor lady! and this knowledge led her to mortify her flesh and penetrate her soul with ceaseless sorrow," replied the Baroness; "but why do you ask? I thought that was a matter quite generally understood."

"Because," I replied, "the Kaiser has a habit of ignoring that fact, and, instead, offers an extract from a letter the Duchess of Orleans wrote to Queen Charlotte in 1710, and which reads:

"'Grave suspicions are entertained regarding the children of the Bavarian house: the Elector and his brothers are thought to be the progeny of a crazy Italian doctor, named Simoni. Though it is claimed the doctor went no further than to give the Elector and his wife a strong cordial, promising therewith to increase their family, all the children born after the experiments began are suspiciously like the medical person.'

"'The madness of this traitorous Dago,' argues William, 'has been bobbing up in the Wittelsbachs time and again, and King Otto is the latest victim of the curse.'

"I know, of course, in a general way, that before the advent of Frederick William the Fourth's niece, the Wittelsbachs were a sound-minded race," I said, in conclusion, "but was there really no hereditary taint on the father's side? You who lived for a life-time at the Munich Court are in my eyes a better authority on this question than historians."

"I have known Ludwig the Second's grandfather and father," answered my friend, "and in my younger days met people who remembered Max Joseph quite well. All were eminently sane men, and of Maximilian's seven brothers and sisters, only one, Princess Alexandra, exhibited signs of derangement at a critical period of her

life, when religious exaltation got the better of her for a time. King Maximilian had half a dozen illegitimate children remarkable for intelligence,—several of them are alive to-day,—but those borne him by his Prussian wife—Ludwig and Otto—went stark, staring mad. So, you see, it is out of the question to either deny or ignore the curse this intermarriage with a Hohenzollern has precipitated upon the Wittelsbachs.” And drawing near to me, as if afraid that her words might be overheard, the Baroness added: “The one not utterly hopeless point of this tragedy is a circumstance moralists have so much deplored,—the perverted sexual taste of the kingly brothers: Ludwig died, and Otto will die, childless; so my poor mistress’s prayer seems to have been answered in one respect at least.”

Queen Marie was the daughter of Prince William of Prussia, son of Frederick William II and uncle of mad Frederick William IV. Her mother was a Princess of Homburg and a blood relative of Marie’s paternal grandfather. The Queen was born October 15, 1825, and died May 17, 1889, having passed many years in acute melancholy.

This latter fact, as well as the Prussian-Bavarian kinship itself, has been carefully covered up for tens of years. Only once, in 1885, I remember reading in the *Vossische Zeitung* some slight allusion to these data, but as the chief of the political police threatened immediate prosecution for *lèse majesté* if the offence were repeated, the subject was dropped. And that happened under the first Emperor, when the present Kaiser was seemingly even further removed from the throne than the Prince of Wales.

Had the old Emperor a presentiment of coming events? Did he, with the wisdom of age, perceive the analogy between his grandnephew and grandson?

There is every probability that he did, for the medical authorities had already decided that Ludwig might have escaped the curse of insanity for many years to come, had power not been thrust upon him so early in life.

If Kaiser Frederick had lived for twenty or thirty years longer, the catastrophe now threatening William II might have been averted, for persons with their minds hereditarily tainted may, nevertheless, shape their destinies to some extent. By refusing to feed their inordinate appetite for self-aggrandizement, by rigidly declining to give way to the egotistical impulses consuming them, they may retard the progress of the disease, may even lead it into harmless channels. Perhaps William would have learned to curb his inherent proclivities, if his judgment had been allowed to mature. As it was, both grandnephews of Frederick William IV decided upon the opposite course.

Suddenly elevated by his father's untimely death,<sup>1</sup> Ludwig gave himself up to the most extravagant enjoyment of kingly puissance, taking the mediæval notions of the "*roy Soleil*" for a standard and acting in a general way as if his petty kingdom were an empire of the vastness of Charlemagne's realm. And the ink of the pamphleteering literature called forth by his tragic end was not yet dry when William plunged into the same abyss, strutting, head tossed in the air, blustering.

And has he not kept it up ever since with true madman's perseverance, braving the ridicule of the world, throwing sound counsel to the winds, and critics, ever so humble, into gaol?

The manner of the Kaiser's intercourse with his Ministers has already been noticed. "Unprecedented," said the

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<sup>1</sup> Maximilian died in his fifty-first, Kaiser Frederick III in his fifty-seventh year.

average reader, no doubt. Pardon: there is an example of such conduct. Ludwig II treated his Excellencies no less brutally. Like William II, he made it a point to live away from the capital the greater part of the year, thereby increasing his councillors' labors, and, like his cousin, he compelled them to chase after him now to Nymphenburg or to the Bergschloss, to Herrenchiemsee and Linderhof, again to his Renaissance, his Rococo, or Chinese palaces. They were "commanded" to follow him to the highest peaks of the Alps and to the lakes, into the mystic depths of his forests, or to his "blue grotto,"—always in great gala, delivering reports in the open with bared heads, the dictum: "I am the master, you the menial," being continuously kept before their eyes. And is not William's habit of interrupting Hohenlohe's or Miquel's lectures on government affairs by a "Look at yonder antlers,—I shot that deer then and there," branching off into a rambling account of some every-day hunting experience, but a repetition, in another form, of Ludwig's practice to break the monotony of Minister von Lutz's reports by declaiming a hundred verses or so from one of Schiller's dramas? And the Kaiser's hankering for absolutism, his assumption of omnipotence when as head of the *Reich* he is really the most restricted of monarchs,—no sovereign at all in the extreme sense of the word,—bears not this impotent bragging an ominous resemblance to Ludwig's hallucination of being a mighty potentate, autocrat of a hundred millions of slaves?

Professor Quidde, of Munich, sold in June, 1894, one hundred and fifty thousand copies of his pamphlet, "*Caligula: a Study of the Insanity of Cesarean Power*," which suggested a parallel between the carryings on of Tiberius's successor and the German Emperor of to-day. Many of the examples given in the *brochure* were striking; with true native profundity, Herr Quidde even unearthed instances

in Roman history that might pass as counterparts of the dismissal of Bismarck and of the squandering of the old Emperor's fortune by William II ; but, though Caligula is dead these eighteen hundred years and despite the fact that the majority of Quidde's analogies were rather far-fetched, the Germans proved so intent upon the promised explanation of their Kaiser's eccentricities that they allowed the publishers to pick up a fortune in an incredibly short space of time,—seventy-five thousand marks for Roman history (brought up to date) within four weeks ! Mommsen's and Treischke's books do not yield half so much in a decade. All told, half a million copies of the pamphlet were purchased ; in other words, every intelligent citizen of the Fatherland either bought or borrowed it, and all read it ! Is it possible to conceive a more telling proof of the nation's distrust of William's sanity ? And if the great mass of the people is moved to suspect that his much-fawned-upon *Genialität* is a disease of the nerves, how much more so are we members of the Court holding daily intercourse with His Majesty, we who are intimately acquainted with his own and his family history and gorged with the gossip of all royal establishments of Europe, past and present ?

The reading public sees from time to time paragraphs in the papers setting forth the Kaiser's aspirations to emulate Frederick the Great. Though anachronistic, there is nothing discreditable in such an ambition ; yet members of the household, who, like myself, see William grimacing for half-hours at a time before a mirror hanging by the side of a life-size portrait of Frederick, cannot help feeling deeply apprehensive that behind all this there is more than vain-gloriousness.

At the breakfast given in honor of Prince Augustus of Saxony, in October, 1895, the Kaiser surprised his guest by an invitation to accompany him to Potsdam, where he

would show him a portrait of Frederick that resembled him, the speaker, in every line. His Royal Highness is a polite man, and, after beholding Pesne's historic canvas, representing the King in his thirtieth year (about 1743), with round cheeks, luxurious brown hair done up in a queue, and his breast encased in a silver cuirass, he told the Emperor many complimentary things, but from his manner it was evident that he was as little impressed with the alleged likeness as the rest of the company. And small wonder: there is no resemblance whatever between "the last of the Kings who finished off forever the trade of King" and the most highfaluting of his *epigoni*. As to His Majesty's particular claim, that he has "the eyes of the victor of Rossbach," one need but quote Mirabeau in refutation. In his "*Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin*," the shrewd French observer says: "Those orbs" (of Frederick) "fascinated one with seduction, or with terror, at the bidding of his great soul." That there exists a resemblance between William's boyish features and those of Frederick, in another painting by Pesne, "*Friedrich und Wilhelmina*,"<sup>1</sup> as the Kaiser pretends, is equally absurd.

As a matter of fact, the monarch of the end of the eighteenth century and his successor of the end of the nineteenth have as little in common, outwardly and inwardly, as the second Ludwig of Bavaria and the fourteenth Louis of France had, and that William, ocular disproof notwithstanding, insists upon imagining himself Frederick's counterpart, is but a phase of his monomania of grandeur equivalent to a hallucination of which his late cousin was possessed.

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<sup>1</sup> The original hangs in the castle of Charlottenburg. It represents Frederick at the age of four, beating a drum, and walking at the side of his sister, afterward the Margravine of Baireuth, attended by a Moor.



Insane reverence for *le roy Soleil* was among the initial symptoms of Ludwig's derangement. The splendid, though personally dirty, *grand monarque* was his Bavarian Majesty's ideal, as Frederick the Absolute is William's demigod. With the progress of Ludwig's disease, his Louis the Fourteenth fallacies kept pace: from imitating that most brilliant of French kings in all but submission to the other sex—he would rather be “mastered” than *maîtressed*—it finally became a fixed idea with him that he had become merged in the person he adored, that he was not the grandson of a little Duke, owing his diadem to the “upstart” Napoleon, but a descendant of Louis the Saint.

In like manner William's Frederick-worship began by easy stages. That, as a boy, passionately fond of the army, he should admire a relative who was one of the greatest generals the world produced, is only natural. That, grown to man's estate, he led every public effort to honor Thomas Carlyle, the architect of his ancestor's fame in the English-speaking world, is commendable. But lo! he clammers onto the high horse himself which yesterday no one could ride but the man who, singlehanded, whipped the whole of united Europe! The admirer has grown into an imitator, the copyist will be a rival soon.

“I am a composer like Frederick.” “Like the great King, I never wear anything but uniform.” “My hatred of England is only equalled by the contempt Frederick the Great bore to the nation of thieves and traffickers,” etc.

The attempts to establish a facial resemblance to Frederick, as well as the oft-claimed intellectual one, have been going on for three years, and of late, spurious pictures supporting this theory are coming to light with alarming frequency; almost every one of the small Court balls are

costume-festivals nowadays at which the Emperor appears in the military dress of Frederick's period, generally as the late King's aide-de-camp; Frederick's marches are played in the Schloss and palace on all occasions, appropriate or not, and as a wind-up the Kaiser usually turns *Kapellmeister* to demonstrate to the professional leader "the spirit in which the composition was conceived," and "how Frederick the Great would have it executed if he were here." And last, but not least, His Majesty has revived and enforces with unwonted energy in such matters the Cabinet order of 1888, commanding visitors at Court to appear in the "Rococo costume<sup>1</sup> Frederick loved so well," while at the same time the uniforms of the palace guards are gradually changed to resemble those *en règle* in the latter half of the past century. Now and again William informs his titled household that he has been "graciously pleased to grant" this or that regiment or battalion (it is always one with which he comes into much personal contact) "grenadier caps *à la* Frederick," "kettle-drums *à la* Frederick," or "bugles *à la* Frederick."

"Frederick held that only the nobility is capable of personal honor,"—this is William's excuse for calling "*vons*" and Barons and *Grafen* "the flower of the nation."

When, in the beginning of October, 1897, Prince Hohenlohe, by threat of resignation, prevented the Kaiser from offering armed assistance to the Queen of Spain (to counteract the possible intervention in Cuban affairs by the United States), His Majesty talked for three days incessantly of "Frederick, who was his own chancellor and

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<sup>1</sup> When first issued, this order called forth so much protest and ridicule that the Kaiser, *par force*, allowed it to become a dead letter for the next eight years.

parliament—of the living, puissant Hohenzollern-initiative, always setting the dogs of war loose before his enemies had time to get over their surprise.

“But Frederick is not dead, he lives here” (striking his breast), “and his mailed fist will clutch somebody’s throat sooner or later,” and so on *ad infinitum*.

Perhaps it will. But when it does, a *paranoia*<sup>1</sup> verdict, such as that which discrowned Your Majesty’s granduncle, in October, 1857, and your cousin, in June, 1886, will assuredly stalk in the wake of that act.

The present chronicler has neither the technical knowledge nor the material at hand to attempt a complete parallel of the cases of Frederick William, Ludwig, and William. That a marked similarity existed between the mental conditions of Queen Louise’s son and the Bavarian grandson of William of Prussia is notorious, and that many of Ludwig’s idiosyncrasies survive in William II was already shown; but I should be the first person to credit these signs of derangement to the account of mere eccentricity if they were exceptional manifestations instead of links in a chain that seems to drag the Kaiser irresistibly to his doom.

Alas! that there is such a chain, and twice alas that it should be the one that drew Ludwig below the weeds of the mountain lake!

The King of Bavaria’s case was diagnosed as exaltation of self-esteem and of craving for grandeur, coupled with limitless egotism and heightened by impulsiveness. He was found to be deficient in judgment, a spendthrift, curious for knowledge and hard-hearted withal; that is, he possessed singularities so prominent in the Kaiser that

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<sup>1</sup> Paranoia, confusion of the senses, was the medical term used to characterize the condition of both Frederick William IV and Ludwig II.

their summary strikes one, *volens volens*, as an estimate of William's character.

Examples of the Kaiser's insane big-headedness are numerous throughout the pages of this volume, and the present chapter has furnished some interesting analogies between certain acts of volition on the part of both royal cousins, but nothing short of a methodical comparison of their lives and deeds as kings and men will explain the Kaiser's case. This I will endeavor to give on the basis of my own observations regarding William's sayings, his actions and vagaries, placed in juxtaposition to an account of Ludwig's character and his life and death furnished by the Munich *Hofdame*.

To begin with the symptoms of monomania of grandeur: Ludwig's borrowed *l'état c'est moi* theories were no more absurd than William's attempts at out-Muscoviting autocracy and playing the Jack-of-all-trades are.

I remember His Majesty coming down to "second breakfast" one afternoon—it was either the 27th or 28th of October, 1894—while the question of who would accept the Chancellorship after Caprivi's dismissal was still pending and the whole country was torn up by doubts and misgivings. "There is a pretty state of things," he cried, and all of us expected to hear it announced that Uncle Chlodwig had finally refused,—“here is a pretty kettle of fish! This city of ——” (naming some small Rhenish town) “petitioning to build sewers and proposing to empty, according to plans submitted, the refuse into the river just above the chief bathing establishment. Of course, nobody in the Home Office saw the terrible mistake, and it took me four hours to correct the drawings and suggest a better plan.”

Bothering about the sewage of a one-horse town while the Empire is quaking in the throes of a crisis is a phenomenon

of rapid thought, or else an anomaly born of the passion to play Providence.

The former Minister of Cult, Count Zedlitz, was selected by William for his important office, despite the fact that he had never enjoyed the benefits of a course in college, and that the most extensive sphere of administration his new Postmaster-General, Herr von Podbielski, a retired cavalry officer, ever presided over was a stable full of hussar horses, for which he bought forage and whose manure he sold at advantageous prices; yet the Kaiser thought the one a fit superior of a Virchow, a Mommsen, and Helmholtz, and the other splendidly qualified to succeed the great Doctor Stephan. The why and wherefore he explained a dozen times before all the Court: "because they will receive their instructions from me." Still, Richard Wagner was drummed out of Munich because Ludwig desired to make him his Minister of Finance.

That a General can do everything is one of the Kaiser's pet phrases, yet ever since his accession to the throne he has bounced generals by the hundred, year after year. It happened at a dinner in June, 1897, that he asked one of his adjutants to name the generals dismissed during the last three months. Thirty were counted, whereupon His Majesty said, with a grin: "That is what I call jugging old iron in right royal style," and the senior of the pensioned officers was only fifty-six years of age! During the further course of the meal the Kaiser opined that his grandfather would have gained even more kingdoms, dukedoms, and principalities if he had had for Chancellor a General, instead of a mere civilian (Bismarck). There is more suspicious acceleration of thought for you, the activity of William's mind, quickened by hallucinations. This symptom the Kaiser has in common with the late Ludwig, as he also appears to have inherited

that hapless monarch's splendid memory. The Munich Dame of the Court tells how long and successfully her late master deceived the unlearned by feats and well calculated tricks of memory, which many accepted as a heaven-born gift instead of as *stigmata*, of evidence of the morbid organization of his brain, and the history of most persons insane from and with Cesarean power records similar phenomena. Tiberius, Caligula, Mohammed Toghlaq, and Ivan the Terrible—all were afflicted with this same pseudo talent. All of them were ready talkers, knew whole regiments of soldiers by names, and could reel off fifteen hundred or two thousand words of technical slang on any given subject. Indeed, Ludwig's and William's granduncle, Frederick William IV, was the rhetorical wonder of his time—for a German.

Whenever I hear William rail against this Prince (he is the only Hohenzollern one may designate an ass in Germany without fear of prosecution), I have the impression that the hatred His Majesty bears the defeated of 1848 is grounded on the knowledge of how much he is like him in political rhabdomancy, fustian style of language, outward religious sentimentalism, and general inconsistency of mind. I fully believe he recognizes at least the last of these fallacies as a weakness peculiarly his own, and to counteract it allows his inborn severity and inclemency full sway.

"What can our brother admire in that wretched Sultan?" asked the Crown Princess Sophie of her sister of Lippe at the family meeting in Friedrichshof in June, 1894.

Victoria, who might have been a vassal of Abdul-Hamid if Bismarck had not interfered and if her first betrothed, the late Alexander of Battenberg, had lived,—Victoria, not a very bright person, passed the query on to her husband. "He must know, the Kaiser tells him everything."

"William says he likes the Grand Seigneur as the embodiment of absolutism, as a ruler prepared to rule at the hazard of seeing one-half of his people dead on the ground, that the other half may learn to obey," spoke Adolph, impressively; "that he has told me a dozen times. 'If Frederick William IV had possessed but a spark of the spirit that lives in the so-called sick man,' he once said, 'I should be monarch in the true sense of the word to-day, though Berlin gutters might have run with blood for weeks in succession during March, '48.'"

The Duchess of Sparta covered her face with both hands. "Horrible!" she sighed.

"But His Majesty's true convictions," whispered Baroness Reischach—"think of the Frankfurt speech."<sup>1</sup>

"Nonsense," resumed the Prince of Hesse, in an effort to efface what his all-too-truthful brother-in-law had said, "our *beau-frère* Willie merely flatters the Padishah to obtain His Sultanship's permission to visit the imperial harem the next time he goes to Constantinople."

I am rather inclined to think that the Kaiser's desire to smoke a *tschibuk* with Abdul-Hamid and a thousand Circassians, with white and black and olive and red women, kadyns and odaliks, is as strong as ever, and that his Turkish policy is in part dictated by this passion; but that Prince Adolph correctly reported His Majesty's sentiments with respect to ideal kingship was demonstrated three years after the family reunion in Empress Frederick's castle, namely, in the summer of 1896, when the Kaiser presented Abdul-Hamid with a chromo for living up to his conception of "rule by the grace of God."

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<sup>1</sup> The Kaiser said on August 16, 1888, at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, "he would rather see his forty-two millions of Prussians dead on the battlefield than give up one foot of ground gained by the Franco-German war."

His hands red with the blood of forty thousand murdered Christians, the successor of the Prophet received, in June of that year, a colored photograph representing the imperial family in a loving group,—Kaiser and Kaiserin and all the children. "My master," our Ambassador, Freiherr von Saurma, was ordered to say in his presentation speech, "hopes that this simple souvenir may be acceptable to Your Majesty as a token of his affection and eternal friendship," massacres or no massacres.

Twice Baron Saurma telegraphed Prince Hohenlohe for further advices on this piece of diplomatic business; his first telegram seemed to indicate that he looked upon the picture as a belated Easter gift, or something of the sort. On being reassured of its up-to-dateness, he wired he would rather resign than carry out so degrading an act after what had just happened in Constantinople; but Hohenlohe, afraid of the terrible scandal sure to ensue, persuaded Saurma to withdraw his threat, and so the presentation took place with due ceremony to both Majesties' profoundest satisfaction.

"Women do not understand these things," was the Emperor's gruff rejoinder when Her Majesty objected to having her likeness and that of the children sent to the "wholesale murderer of Christians." "What do women know about being consequential? These Armenians were rebels, and my friend, the Sultan, treated them as I would treat a mob opposing my authority, any day."

"But," pleaded Her Majesty, "Herr von Marschall tells me it was primarily a religious riot, the Mussulmans falling on the Giaours and killing them off like so many sheep."

The Kaiser shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "I am shepherd of the Lutheran Christians in Prussia," he said, brutally; "those in foreign lands must take care of themselves."



And a year and a half later he sent Prince Heinrich on "the new crusade, to uphold the Cross and punish the slayers of Christians in China." But, then, His Majesty never dined with the Tientze, the Son of Heaven, and that worthy's Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, when he visited Germany in August, 1896, utterly failed to fulfil William's expectations.

While insanity of power usually instils an overweening passion for the military in its victims, Ludwig differed from his cousin, the Kaiser, in the point of bellicose proclivities. During the last ten years of his life, he scarcely ever donned uniform, but, though trotting and marching and countermarching to the tune of drum and fife had no allurements for the disciple of Richard Wagner, he utilized the army as eagerly as William for purposes designed to heighten the lustre of his personal appearances.

My friend tells me that the drive-ways and footpaths of the Munich royal park, *Englischer Garten*, were fairly alive with soldiers, gendarmes, police, and detectives when the King was at home. The public was given to understand that the less seen of it the better, and ladies and gentlemen of the Court, known to the officials, had to submit to petty annoyances in the way of identification, warnings, etc., at such times as well as the common rabble. Ludwig never rode or drove out except *à la Shah*,—cavalry in the front, at both sides, and in the rear.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "your poor King suffered from monomania of suspicion, or exaltation of awe."

This the *Hofdame* denied. "Only during the last twelve months of his life that phase of insanity appeared to trouble him." The Baroness told me of several visits she paid the King in his lonely mountain castles on behalf of her mistress. "Sometimes," she said, "I secured permission to gaze upon the all-highest face for a second or two,

that I might be the better able to make a minute report to Her Majesty. On other occasions I saw Ludwig, unbeknown to him, as he drove past in his gilded carriage over lonely roads regularly patrolled by pickets of good-looking horsemen attired in the most fetching uniforms. It was evident the mad monarch could not do without the royal pomp of *soldateska*. Even after his misanthropy had degenerated into positive hatred of mankind—such hatred that he was unable to look a person in the face—he would not miss his regiments, to him the representatives of kingly puissance.”

Heretofore Ludwig's soldier-worship has been explained solely on immoral grounds, with divers references to Nicomedes-Cæsar; the above interpretation, which research has proved correct, brings it nearer home by identifying it as one of the features of insanity of power. In Czar Paul, one of William's relatives on the side of his father's mother,<sup>1</sup> this element of monomania of grandeur overtopped the rest of his crazes, but even then the son of Soltikof and Catherine did not go further in his military tyranny than William does. Paul is reported to have passed most of his time on the drill-ground; so does the Kaiser. His biographers tell us that “his mind was incessantly occupied with petty regulations about costumes and appearances;” that he was “continually inventing new dresses and accoutrements for his soldiers.” You should hear William preach on the importance of such warlike measures as the length or shortness of a sabre-strap, the pointed or broad form of heels attached to the dancing-pumps of young lieutenants commanded to Court balls, or

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<sup>1</sup> The mad Paul of Russia was the grandfather of Empress Augusta, consort of William I. Many of Czar Paul's freaks are revived by William II.

listen to his tirades against setting the buttons of an undress frock in a straight line,—themes we people of the Court hear discussed morning, noon, and night. Moreover, count, if you can, William's regulations and orders about the cut of pantaloons, the facings of pelisses, and the impression tan boots are sure to make on African savages, and you will think better of that pseudo-Romanoff strangled "because his lucid intervals became shorter week after week." Over the taxpayer's feelings, who pays for the Kaiser's pettifoggery, his endless innovations and alleged improvements, that improve only the bank accounts of army purveyors and are often dropped as suddenly as they are introduced,—over the sentiments of this beast of burden, steeped in penury, indifference, and political hysteria, I will draw the veil.

Paul, we are assured, was crazy enough to enforce his clothes regulations even upon civilians, A.D. 1796. And a hundred years later, the Kaiser ordered that all station-masters in Prussia must provide themselves with a specially designed dress-suit, including a toy sword and a plumed hat, to wear when he passes through their town. As the outfit costs from three to four hundred marks, and the majority of the officials receive but three or four times as much per annum, resignation or starvation, or both, became the order of the day.

That His Majesty tells the ladies of his household what they shall wear on festive occasions is tyrannical, but not wholly unreasonable, seeing that he imagines he owns his *entourage* body and soul, but other women, even relatives of His Majesty, will not take kindly to his expensive suggestions. Seldom does a ball or state occasion pass that there is not a gap in the line of our royal dames; now the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern sends "her regrets," again Princess Aribert goes to bed twenty-four

hours previous to a costume festival at Court. Even the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Baden declines time and again to help ruin her husband by reckless extravagance of toilets, such as the Kaiser demands his guests to engage in. As a matter of fact, William's passion for having everything his own way is entirely incompatible with reason. There is no art outside of the narrow circle approved by him, no stage and no state craft, unless conducted on rules laid down by him to actors, to parliamentarians, to diplomats. His soldiers, his children, the women of his household and of society, his officials and men friends, all must be dressed, or must masquerade, according to his varying moods.

On returning from a review, the war-lord seldom speaks of the success or non-success of the exercises; that he caught Lieutenant von X. Y. wearing an overcoat an inch shorter than the regulations stipulate, or a sub-officer attired in pantaloons of his own, instead of those furnished by the regiment, is of far greater importance in the Kaiser's eyes. For these eyes reflect the mere outer film of things correctly enough, but do not penetrate below the surface because the mind directing them works too rapidly to weigh the relative importance of things.

At the close of the manœuvre season of 1897, Count Haeseler, the General upon whom Moltke's mantle is supposed to have descended, said to a Reichstag deputy: "Those mimic battles arranged by His Majesty were magnificent, each ending like that between the fabulous lions, whose tails alone remained on the field; but as to the burial of the dead (supposing the Kaiser's theories were followed out), I cannot, for the life of me, conceive who would attend to it. Let us assume, for argument's sake, that the nations of the *Dreibund* march into the field under the chief war-lord's guidance,—Germans and Austrians side by side, Italians covering the rear. Then let

two or three battles be fought, such as we experienced in Bavaria this summer: vast masses of foot launched on top of each other, *tambour battant*, horse and artillery swallowing hailstorms of bullets with gusto, as if they were *Erbswurst* soup! Why, unless our Peninsular friends turned grave-diggers one and all, pestilence would drive them back. It is my humble opinion," concluded Count Haeseler, with a sarcastic smile, "that the dead never entered into His Majesty's calculations."

In his book, "The Blot Upon the Brain," William W. Ireland, M.D., Edinburgh, says: "They" (the victims of insanity of power) "are easily beaten in the field by generals who prefer what is essential to what is superfluous."

## CHAPTER XVIII

That both royal cousins were possessed of this passion for mummary (uniforms, liveries, masquerades in and out of season),—King Ludwig sometimes carried it so far as to dress his servants as Indian Rajahs, and sit down to supper in the open while the thermometer was near the freezing-point,—this analogous turn of mind in Frederick William the Fourth's grandnephews may perhaps pass for accidental, be the relation of this craze to insanity of power ever so well founded,—more convincing are similarities in the lives of Ludwig and William that show a concurrence of opinion in the line of the higher emotions.

"During the night of October 15, 1885, half an hour after midnight," says my Munich friend, with a reference to her diary, "I was called up from bed by the night-watch rapping at my door. With my senses benumbed by sleep, I understood only these words: 'Majesty wants you.'

"'Is Her Majesty ill?' I cried, much alarmed, while pulling on my slippers. By that time my maid had arrived. 'The King has come from Linderhof and wants to see the Queen,' she said. 'He had the candles lit in the reception-room by his own servants, and is impatiently walking the floor wondering why Her Majesty keeps him waiting.'

"Lieschen told me this while we were running to the Queen's bedroom. In ten minutes our mistress was dressed. In five minutes more I heard the noise of wheels in the court-yard below: the King was driving away.

"I hastened down-stairs to accompany Her Majesty back to her apartment. She looked awe-struck, but did not speak a word. Only when I had put her to bed again, and was about to take my leave, she said: 'Marguerite, I do not want you to retire with feelings of misgiving. The King brought no alarming news. He talked of nothing but the weather, and at the moment of departing added: 'To-day, I believe, is your sixtieth birthday. Accept my royal felicitations.''"

To compel a sickly old woman to get up in the middle of the night for the pleasure of haranguing her with platitudes,—who but a madman could conceive so preposterous an idea! "Yet look at the date," resumed the Baroness: "October 15, 1885! Only eight months before Ludwig's tortuous career came to a horrible end."

The speaker recalled numerous instances of the King's cruelty to his mother: how he forced her to vacate the palace she liked best; how, by ostentatious display, he caused Queen Marie to doubly feel the loss of power and influence; how, by his parade of hatred and contempt for her relatives, he wounded her sentiments and lessened her popularity in the land,—three examples out of a hundred, that remind one strangely of the Kaiser's treatment of the Empress Frederick.

That William dispossessed his mother from the home where she had spent the happiest years of her life,<sup>1</sup> that he gruffly denied her the poor pleasure of assuming representative social duties during Auguste Victoria's frequent

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<sup>1</sup> Immediately after Emperor Frederick III died, William assumed possession of Castle Friedrichskron, where his parents had lived for over thirty years, and to efface every sign of his father's residence there he dropped the name and reinstated that designated by the builder, Frederick II; namely, Neues Palais.

pregnancies ("If my wife is ill, I will be Kaiser and Kaiserin both," were his words), that he is the leader of Anglo-phobia in Germany and the abettor of hundreds of printed insults to the Empress Frederick, are facts as notorious as they are pitiful.

I have heard these and similar events discussed; I have seen them wept over in the royal family. "It is his confounded bad heart," voted Prince Albrecht. "Ay, this sort of thing is dictated by meanness, common, everyday cussedness," decided the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen.

An anonymous letter, purporting to echo the opinion of a renowned foreign authority on affections of the sentiments, diagnosed the case as the result of power-drunkness, and went on to state that, as Mohammed Toghlaq, the megalomaniacal Sultan of India, was pleased to kill his brother and exalt his mother, so it was William's *bon plaisir* to give a lift to Prince Heinrich (occasionally) and abuse his parent.

While unwilling to adopt this extreme view, I must confess that the Emperor's habit of signing his letters and telegrams to his mother and to his wife and children, "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," smacks decidedly of insane exaltation of self-esteem.

With chronicling stories of His Majesty's excessive pride, a diarist of Samuel Pepys' industry could be kept busy ever and anon; to-day the General Order issued by the *Kommandant* of Potsdam announces, at the top of its columns, that His Majesty is "graciously pleased to sometimes drive a dog-cart" (follows elaborate description of vehicle, horse, and livery, which latter is different from the ordinary one), "he handling the ribbons himself and the Empress sitting *dos-à-dos* with the groom." "Officers and men," continues the paper, "are cautioned to take



notice of the above fact and to be careful to execute the prescribed evolutions when meeting the imperial party, under penalty," etc. To-morrow the Kaiser narrates at supper how he whisked Count Gessler off Bornstädter Feld and ordered him to keep to his room for three days, "because his spurs were not of the approved pattern."

"*Graf Gessler?*" queried the Kaiserin,—"*Gessler of the Cuirassiers and of my Body-guard?*"

"The same. And why did I do it? I might not have been so hard on him, had he not passed me the other day without saluting when I was in my dog-cart."

"Surely, he did not recognize our new livery."

"He ought to recognize his Emperor through a three-inch board! And, by the way," added His Majesty, "I learned the name of that captain of Dragoons who failed to *make front* before us near Babelsberg Sunday morning; it was Freiherr von —, garrisoned at —, and commanded to Berlin to serve on the General Staff. I found that out by sending a description of the delinquent to the colonels of all our dragoon regiments. He is on his way home. Berlin is no place for a donkey of his calibre."

In the winter of 1895, Lieutenant-Colonel von Natzmer came near losing his head as commander of the Third Guard Lancers on account of the stupidity of a trooper who, being sent on *galopin* duty in the course of some exercises, mistook the Emperor for a captain of infantry, named Kahn, William wearing no shoulder-knots or other insignia on that occasion. Only by offering to distribute photographs of His Majesty in a variety of uniforms among his men did Natzmer save his bacon. The case of under-officer Mohr, of the First Foot Guards, and how he became a sergeant, is also interesting. Mohr was never suspected of "carrying a field-marshal's staff in his knapsack," but

nature fitted him with eyes capable of much contraction and dilation of pupils, so that, like a member of the genus *Felis*, he can see in the dark. That stood him in good stead when he ran across His Majesty near the Berlin Stadt Schloss one wintry evening. Recognizing the war-lord at a distance of several paces, he promptly *made front*, sounding an all-submissive "Good-evening, Your Majesty."

William was elated. There was true loyalty. This fellow, if he had half a chance, would live up to the maxim that a soldier will recognize the Kaiser through three inches of oak. "Who are you, my son?"

"Under-officer Mohr of the First Guards, at Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command."

"Only an under-officer? But you have a sweetheart, I reckon?"

"At Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command,—yes, the daughter of *Feldwebel* ——"

"Then go to your room, sew on the stripes, and report to your future father-in-law and to the young woman as His Majesty's sergeant. Right about face, forward, march!"

Mohr (marching "as if he were going to throw away his legs," as the phrase goes): "Thanks, a thousand humble thanks! God save Your Imperial and Royal Majesty."

Another and more dangerous form of the Kaiser's excessive vanity and egomania shows in the current prosecutions for *lèse majesté*. For this offence sentences amounting to some three hundred years of imprisonment are imposed by Prussian judges from January to December, and as the courts of the allied German states and statelets follow the lead, it is calculated that, on this score alone, as many years of imprisonment are annually meted out in the Fatherland as there are days in the year. Accordingly, three thousand five hundred years—twice the time of the Christian

era, lacking a few paltry centuries—were wiped out of the lives of some eight to nine thousand of his subjects since William assumed the crown, the list of culprits embracing both sexes and all classes of society. And for what?

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (I quote from public records) for the heinous crime of impeaching the Kaiser's aptitude as a composer, as a ruler, poet, diplomat, or ship-builder; as a conqueror, orchestra-leader, or expounder of the Monroe doctrine; as a sportsman, as God's anointed, as a painter, strategist, novel-writer, circus-director, or lawgiver; as advocate of duellos, as a constitutional king, stage-manager, or absolute monarch; as playwright, huntsman, infantryman, cavalryman, family-man, or maid-of-all-work. The prosecutor's license is practically limitless; but there are still some knots in his rope that admit of lengthening the line. To let no guilty one escape, it is stipulated, for instance, that insult to Majesty superannuates only after five years. Thus a discharged servant, a faithless friend, or malicious employer may prosecute you in January, 1898, for a remark you dropped (or did not drop) in December, 1893, or, if he prefers, he may blackmail you for that length of time under threat of informing the state's attorney. And that frequently happens in the Fatherland.

As to the personalities of the culprits, I will quote from one of the daily bulletins:

"The wife of a feudal land-owner in Pomerania was 'sent up' for nine months because she remarked that the Emperor might kiss her foot.

"A registered prostitute in Altona got four months' imprisonment for a similar offence, though her invitation was of a more comprehensive character.

"Eugen Richter's sally, made in the Reichstag some time ago: 'Yesterday the German Emperor and fifty of the noblest of the nation

ran for two hours after an old sow,' a Breslau editor clipped for his paper and inserted under the head of 'Court News,' adding date and place. The joke cost him his liberty for nine months.

"In September, 1897, a popular music-teacher, Fräulein Hedwig Jade, in Stettin, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for having, in 1893, denounced the 'Song to Ægir' as a piece of rubbish."

The poor girl addressed a petition for pardon to my mistress; but, being afraid to face her husband on this score, the Empress asked Herr von Levetzow, the former President of the Reichstag, to present the matter.

This is her report of that gentleman's interview with the Kaiser:

"Herr von Levetzow had no sooner broached the case, than the Emperor interrupted him. 'You think the laws against *lèse majesté* are too rigidly enforced,' he cried. 'Why, you astonish me! That there are so many prosecutions, only proves that the sentences imposed are much too light. If they were not, those outcasts that dare to point the finger of scorn at God's anointed would be afraid to open their mouths. Believe me, as soon as I can find a *man*, a *real man*, to take charge of my Chancellor's office, I will have him prepare a bill increasing the punishment for traitors of this sort.'

"Of course," concluded Her Majesty, "after that, poor Herr von Levetzow had not the heart to press the petition for pardon."

"Increasing the punishment for *lèse majesté*? and at this early date!" exclaimed Deputy Richter, when the non-success of the venture was reported to him by one of his intimates at Court,—“and Ludwig II proposed a similar course of action only during the last two years of his lunacy! When he sentenced some lackeys to be knouted to death who had laughed on seeing him gallop around his

library, snorting and neighing like a horse; when he ordered that his Minister of Finance should lose both eyes for refusing to advance him twenty millions to finish his fairy castle of Neuschwanstein, or when he decided that an adjutant, who had failed to secure a lover for him, was to famish in the 'black hole' below the foundations of Linderhof, the King was undoubtedly mad, and only a madman could have expected to see such commands executed in 1885 or 1886! During the earlier stages of his illness, even acute monomania of pride and vanity could not induce him to ask severer punishment for victims of the existing laws."

Meanwhile, the increased punishments have come to pass without resort to legislation. Acting upon His Majesty's suggestion, the courts are of late condemning men and women for criticisms of governmental acts *in which the Kaiser takes a special interest*, for protesting against the Sedan celebration on the score of peace propaganda, for instance, and the lists of offenders comprise, besides members of the aristocracy and prostitutes, little boys and girls who, on account of tender age, are otherwise exempt from criminal prosecution.

"It is William's sense of divine appointment that makes him look so sharply after criminals of this sort," is my mistress's stereotyped apology when members of the family bring up the matter. Poor lady! she is not always happy in the selection of her similes. The above one, for instance, she used once too often; namely, on the occasion of a gathering of relatives at the Neues Palais, in October, 1897, when the Court was laughing over an act of imperial clemency in the case of a sixteen-year-old nurse-girl from Coblenz, who had been condemned to nine months' imprisonment for saying she would like to sleep with the Emperor.

William, by the merest accident, learned of this, and at once pardoned the precocious youngster.

"She has probably seen me during the manoeuvres in Rhineland," he argued, curling his moustache, "and devil take me if I blame the wench. Ill-bred as she is, that was *her* manner of expressing admiration."

The *finale voluntary* to this was a decision of a Breslau judge, viz.: that a certain Wilhelm Schultze, because he had wished himself in the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen's place (place stipulated), and had said so openly and shamelessly, was not punishable for libel under the law. Argued the judge: "Schultze is an ignorant fellow, and, having great admiration for Princess Charlotte, expressed that feeling after the manner of his ilk. *Ergo*, I discharge him, with a warning."

These are exceptions, and not particularly edifying ones, from a cruel rule that recalls the mad vagaries of the crazy Rudolph II,<sup>1</sup> and does more to undermine royalist sentiment than even the Kaiser's speeches. A friend of mine in the Ministry of Justice has kept a record of the sentences imposed for criticisms of the "Song to Ægir." He counted three hundred and eleven years, seven months, and fines amounting to nine thousand marks, during 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896. Can you blame His Majesty's adjutants for listening with straight faces to his side-splitting remark: "Now you will hear my magnificent composition," when, at a banquet in Mohacs, Hungary (September, 1897), the programme announced the song to the

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolph II, Emperor of Germany,—his grandmother was the crazy Juana of Spain,—reigned from 1576 to 1612. He was insane on the subject of his imperial dignity, as well as on other subjects, and countless innocent people lost their lives, their liberty, and their fortunes for alleged lack of respect for this crowned madman.

sea-god, who in reality was a miserable landlubber. "The Austrians and Hungarians laughed to kill themselves," reported one of the participants, "but we knew better. If any of our crew had dared to smile assent, he would have been given occasion for kicking himself sooner or later."

In connection with *lèse majesté*, it should not go unnoticed, however, that there are one hundred and forty-eight English square miles in Germany where man, woman, and child may say of the Kaiser what they please, this sanctuary being known as Reuss, short for Elder Branch, while the Almanach de Gotha designates it as Reuss-Greiz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Eberswalde, with several villages yet to be heard from. The potentate of this district is Heinrich XXII, a cousin of the Heinrich who, during his wedding-night, was overheard to apostrophize his wife *à la main gauche*, the circus-rider Loisset: "Oh, Chlo-tilde my only!" whereupon the former queen of the arena responded with delicious pathos: "Oh, Heinrich my twentieth!"

As old Kaiser Wilhelm allowed this story to be published throughout Prussia, the Reuss *tyrannos* at once determined that hereafter no form or manner of black-guardism directed against the Hohenzollerns should be liable to prosecution in his territory, and to this resolve His Grace has nobly stuck all these years (since 1879).

Newspapers seized for insult to Majesty in all the rest of the twenty-five states and Free Cities, constituting the common Fatherland, are freely circulated in Reuss, *lignee*; its 53,787 inhabitants, and visiting strangers too, may shout all they like about William's idiosyncrasies, and *Serenissimi*' dog-tax records abound in such invectives as "Wilhelm" and "Preuss."

A feature of William's character that recalls some of the darkest days of his late cousin's declining years is the

hatred he bears to his servants. Those one thousand ill-paid menials in showy liveries, hanging about the royal residences, are but a "contemptible thieving horde" in his eyes,—“rascals whom to know by name would be to honor them.” When talking to his people,—needless to say it is always to give a command or ask a question,—the Kaiser invariably addresses man or woman: “You, there!” and none of them ever heard that cheap courtesy: “Good-morning” or “Good-evening” from the master’s lips.

My Munich friend tells atrocious stories of the “Chinese ceremonial” *en vogue* at Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee from 1880 to 1886,—how the King’s servants had to scratch at the wood-work to announce their presence at the door——

“Why that?” I interrupted.

“Because the King could tolerate a lackey only if acting the dog that His Majesty thought him to be!” The Baroness continued: “His valets had to approach him crouching on their stomachs,—no one wearing the royal livery dared look the King in the face, and, finally, Ludwig even thought the tone of his voice too good for his people. So he conceived the plan of writing his orders on slips of paper and, spitting on them, pushed them under the door for those outside to pick up.”

Of course, nothing like it has yet been introduced at the Neues Palais and Schloss, but Ludwig, too, worked himself up to the frenzy of servant-beating by easy stages. During the initial phases of his malady, he would order a servant who had displeased him to be removed to some lonely manor-house or lodge, there to continue for the rest of his days at an inferior salary and without ever having an opportunity to gaze upon the royal presence again. The same happened to the Kaiser’s old body-chasseur Rau, among other royal employees,—Rau, who caught



His Majesty's coat-tail in the carriage-door,—and to Rau's successor, who, on a particularly warm winter day, asked whether His Majesty required a lap-robe, instead of placing it in the coach without troubling the master, and to *Haushofmeister* (Major-domo) von Jurns, because the royal yacht *Alexandra* could not be got ready so quickly as the Kaiser demanded.

Like all victims of morbid impulsiveness, a symptom going hand in hand with megalomania, the Kaiser thinks himself above the restrictions of space and time. If he wants a thing, he imagines he has but to say so in order to procure it, whether it be a shirt-stud dropped under the table, or a historical painting for which a dozen square yards of canvas have just been nailed up.

And this condition of the imperial mind tends to more people's ruin than all the rest of His Majesty's crazy notions, save, perhaps, the one compelling persons to make themselves invisible on demand.

The palace regulations stipulate that no servant shall be found in the Emperor's apartments during His Majesty's presence in the castle, sleeping hours excepted. Now it happens sometimes that His Majesty rises at the fifth hour, instead of the seventh or eighth, as announced. What are servants, suddenly confronted by the news of the master's approach while engaged in cleaning, to do? To drop work means dismissal, and to be seen by His Majesty carries the same penalty with it; so they run, simply run, trusting to good luck that the evidence of disorder in the rooms may not be noticed.

My maid, who was formerly attached to the royal chambers, says it is a curious spectacle to see the wood-carriers, firemen, scrubbers, dusters, window-cleaners, and polishers tumble over each other in a wild scramble to elude the master's eye. There must be no noise, no spilling

of water, and certain corridors and staircases are to be avoided at all hazards. Suzette herself hid once for three-quarters of an hour in an empty stove,<sup>1</sup> the only place of safety reachable when the Kaiser came upon her as she was about to enter his room. And this sort of hiding-place has since become popular in the palace, though it is apt to ruin clothes and house-dresses, especially the latter, of white and blue calico, with white aprons and ditto cuffs and collars.

"But why did you not crawl out as soon as His Majesty had passed?" I asked.

"Because the Kaiser remained in the room to which the stove belonged, and the slightest bit of noise would certainly have brought him round to my prison gate. And then—*Kopf ab*" (off goes my head), "as *gnädige Frau* knows."

I may be allowed to interpolate here that Prussia rejoices in a peculiar law permitting master and mistress to correct their domestics by an occasional sound thrashing. The statute is an old one, and the Diet has striven to abolish it ever since it, the legislative body itself, struggled into existence. But all attempts met with most vigorous opposition by the government. When the proud privilege of kicking a flunky, or boxing a maid's ears, is up for discussion, the bench of the Ministry is always occupied to the last man, whilst royalist orators give ready support to the official claim that the ancient law is one of the pillars of social order and that its abolishment means nothing short of anarchy.

Why the state should go out of its way to uphold this cruel and barbarous statute is not easily conceivable to

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<sup>1</sup> In the Neues Palais the stoves are lighted from the corridors, and have immense openings.

outsiders. Surely, the times are past when it was thought consistent with the dignity of the King of Prussia to have salt-laden pistols at his elbow in order "to hurry up" sluggish pages. Frederick William I followed that custom, and in one and the same year lamed one man for life and blew another's eyes out. That happened one hundred and fifty or more years ago. Ancient history, is it not? But history repeats itself. The great Frederick and his puny successor, when punishing servants, never went further than to disfigure their faces by blows with walking-sticks, or the butt end of a sword, yet Karl of Prussia, granduncle of the present Kaiser, revived Frederick William's practices and occasionally killed a menial or two,—a fact which led one of his brothers to remark that, if not a Prince, Karl would surely die by the halter. All of which shows that the Hohenzollerns are dangerous masters; that cruelty runs in the family, so to speak;—as a matter of fact, terror stalks ahead of William, his people flee, and hide in fire-places and niches to escape his eye: they do not care to expose themselves to violence; and what guarantee is there against a caning, or worse, when the sight of a servant walking up a staircase or through a corridor suffices to throw the master into a violent passion?

"*Die verdammten Hausdiener*" (those accursed flunkies) "lounge everywhere about the palace; Eulenburg, you must keep them in the kitchen, or cellar, where they belong," is His Majesty's every-day complaint to his grand-master, when at home.

"May it please Your Majesty, no man or woman enters the residential parts of the palace unless on special duty."

"Details, my dear Eulenburg, do not concern me, and I will not have them thrown up to me. I tell you, and repeat, that the sight of the lackey is distasteful to me, and it is your business to rid my environment of eye-sores."

There was "Mother Anna," the wood-carrier. One morning, in the winter of 1889, having deposited her bundle of fire-sticks in the Kaiser's antechamber, she caught a glimpse of His Majesty through the half-open door. He was sitting at his desk, reading a newspaper. "Lord," thought "Mother Anna," "there is God's anointed in his dressing-gown! Who would have thought that my poor old eyes would ever be blessed by such a vision. And," she said to her mates later on, "I stood as still as a mouse, just like a miserable little mouse, and peeped and peeped with frightened yet grateful eyes."

And while the old women were still gossiping, one of the secretaries from the Court-marshal's office came up to inquire which of them had been on duty in the imperial apartments that morning.

"I," said "Mother Anna," falteringly.

"Well, then pack your traps and get your wages. His Majesty will not allow such as you to spy into his affairs."

Empress Frederick took care of "Mother Anna," giving her work on Bornstädt farm, otherwise she might have famished, for she was seventy when turned away from the Neues Palais.

But there are rows with the servants even for lesser cause,—about a cigar-stump, for instance.

It was, I believe, in February, 1896, when His Majesty warned the Empress and the members of the *entourage* against "the pilfering lot of hirelings that infest the palace."

"Nothing is safe," he cried, adding, with a show of severity: "I ought to turn my rooms into a fortress, as did the lord of the Hradschin" (imperial palace in Prague).

In the afternoon Her Majesty sent Herr von der Knesbeck to ascertain when, and of what, the Kaiser had been robbed. Hear his report: "On Sunday night, after the

smoker, His Majesty put the stump of an *echte* (real) "Havana cigar into an ash-tray in his small toilet-room; to-day" (Wednesday), "when he desired to finish it, it was gone, and all inquiries among the attendants, *Kammerdiener*, wardrobemen, lackeys, and chasseurs, proved unsatisfactory. His Majesty therefore concluded that one of the footmen stole the stump, and an investigation is under way."

It lasted three days. Then the *corpus delicti* was found—ruined beyond hope of retrieval—at the bottom of a refuse-barrel. After seeing it on the dresser for two mornings in succession, one of the chambermaids had thrown it away.

"The *Stummel* looked so shrunk up," said the reckless hussy, "I thought His Majesty did not want it any more, and, fearing a reprimand for allowing dust-catching things to lie around, I put it into my pail and cleaned the ash-tray."

The Kaiser likes popular applause, huzzahs, and *hochs*, but the hurrahers must keep at a distance. Unlike his royal granduncle and his cousin of Bavaria, he is not a misanthropist, not yet, but his contempt for everybody beyond the pale of his own set—"das verdamnte Publikum" he calls them—increases more and more, particularly as to women.

One year after another Her Majesty and Count Eulenburg experience greater difficulty in persuading the Kaiser to permit the customary royal procession at the Opera House ball, held during carnival, and even if he consents to "mix" with the "*damned public*" on that one occasion, he usually backs out at the last moment. In 1895 and 1896, William chose to emphasize this contemptuous treatment of his Berliners by persistently keeping to the rear of the royal box, so that very few of the thousands ready to smile upon him got a chance to do so. Does not

this remind one of mad Ludwig's saying: "The people do not *deserve* to see the King"?

Quite frequently the Kaiser's unapproachableness has led to most disgraceful scenes. So it happened on Whit-Monday, 1894, that the Kaiser refused to attend the celebration of the Lehr und Wehr battalion, opposite the Neues Palais, unless *das verfluchte Publikum* was pushed further back, whereupon imperial adjutants, Court and House marshals, and generals galore scrambled off in all directions to have the order attended to. At the bidding of the then *Kommandant* of Potsdam, Herr von Bülow, mounted *Schutzmänner* and soldiers on guard used their steeds and muskets freely, and next day our grand-master received over a hundred complaints from ladies of the aristocracy, reporting that they had their feet trampled on by grenadiers and their hats and faces brushed by horses' tails,—eventualities not on the programme so far as their invitations indicated.

"These hysterics," as he called the protests, afforded William much amusement and pleased him the more, as they seemed to back up his oft-expressed opinion that women are apt to become nuisances on public occasions.

"I will have none of them by and by," he said, and forthwith gave orders that the number of permits admitting members of the weaker sex to the parade-grounds should be gradually lessened. To the spring parade of 1896, held in the Lustgarten adjoining the Potsdam Stadt Schloss, only one hundred officers' wives and daughters were invited, these to have their seats on the terrace.

The review was set for eleven o'clock, but most of the favored ladies arrived two hours earlier, whereupon they were told by a police lieutenant, standing at the Schloss gate, that His Majesty had given orders to keep the terrace clear until the very moment he appeared on the grounds.

Royal servants then took charge of the women and conducted them into a vault-like subway, at the further end of which was a small door leading to the terrace over dirty steps.

In this dark, damp, and ill-smelling cellar the ladies were locked up until two minutes to eleven, when they were set free to select places for themselves. I was standing behind Her Majesty and little Princess Louise at one of the lower windows of the Palace, in full view of the extraordinary spectacle that now ensued. Their Excellencies and Ladyships came panting up the steps, pushing and jostling, pawing and clawing each other, to gain precedence or room. Here a dowager countess raised her skirts above the knees to climb over a row of chairs, there the young wife of a commanding general tiptoed along the stone rampart, her train over one arm and exposing an incredible expanse of hosiery. *Freifrau* von L——'s lace petticoat was torn into tatters in her efforts to win an advantageous place,—there was no such reckless display of limbs and linen since Borel unbalanced his ladies for "*La Bascule*." The First Guards, standing opposite, shouted with laughter. Her Majesty was furious. Turning to her brother, she said: "After this you will agree with me, I hope, that the Kaiser's dislike for woman's attendance at military spectacles is well founded. I blush for our soldiers, compelled to witness such a sight." Poor lads! they deserved pity, for the Emperor, enraged at the "*damned public's*" behavior, continued the drill half an hour longer than usual.

But the Kaiser's *animose* notions find expression also in measures of political significance. So he changed the district of Rominton, where he has a hunting-box, into an Eveless Eden by buying out all the farmers who were either married or employed female help, and the once

populous village of Theerbude is nowadays half deserted in consequence. Still, a few petticoats remain there, and His Majesty had a new carriage-road built, enabling him to reach his residence "without running the gauntlet of gaping wenches."

There are many pages in my Munich friend's diary reporting similar measures instituted, or proposed to be instituted, by the late King Ludwig; but the analogy between the cousins is most striking in the infatuation for the stage, common to both, and in the revelations of their superlative egotism,—the passion to satisfy their appetites, which was Ludwig's, and is William's, only aim in life. The theatrical bee in their bonnets seems to be the same that buzzed in the head of the late Frederick William IV, when mysticism had not the upper hand in that quarter; but, whether inherited or not, it is one of the stock fixtures of insanity of power. It cost the Romans under Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Heliogabalus thousands of millions. Ivan the Terrible was an actor of no inconsiderable power, and even those poor imbeciles, Charles II and Don Carlos, offsprings of megalomaniacs rather than power-drunk themselves, were much devoted to the spectacle, though probably preferring a "horse with its bowels gored out, or a Jew writhing in the fire," to high tragedy.

At first, Ludwig was a patron of the drama of the most legitimate order: the classics of German literature appealed mightily to his sense of the ideal, and their foremost interpreters became his companions. One of them was the tragedian Rohde, the other the Wagner singer Nachbaur. They were granted the unheard-of privilege to *tutoyer* the King, but there was nothing in Ludwig's relations to these men that shunned the light of day. The King's *faible* for the theatrical approached



the abnormal only when his enthusiasm for Richard Wagner degenerated into a cult and when his admiration for the romantic Kainz addressed itself to the person, instead of the artist. As Ludwig's brain became more clouded,—that is, as his insane big-headedness increased and his perverted tastes pushed to the front more brazenly,—the former patron of "Egmont," the "Maid of Orleans," and "Marion De Lorme" threw classics to the dogs. He would have only such plays on the royal boards that depicted his own dreams of greatness, that showed him (or the historic types he thought he impersonated) as the embodiment of earthly power, in the rôle of conqueror, lawgiver, or wrathful divinity, as arbiter of the world and in similar parts. And to obtain the dramatic products wanted, he hired men to join together comedies and tragedies from anecdotes, court scenes, and incidents which he himself furnished ready rabbeted and pared down, as are the walls and roofs and chimneys and window-casings of those Norwegian wooden houses, sent parcelwise all over Europe.

The Kaiser's taste in matters theatrical has moved along similar lines of idealism, followed by self-glorification. To begin with: Goethe, Schiller, Hebbel, Grillparzer, then Wildenbruch, Lauff, Büttner.

During the first four or five years of his reign, His Majesty tried to trundle the Thespian chariot alongside his political and diplomatic tally-ho coaches. His Intendant of the Royal Play and Opera Houses, Bolko Count Hochberg, the same who once came near being brother-in-law to Herbert Bismarck, was a good enough Major of the Reserves, but as to competing with Oscar Blumenthal, Ludwig Barnay, and the late Pollini,—that was entirely out of the question. "I will let him run the financial end, and look after the artistic department myself," said His

Majesty, shortly after the Court left off mourning for his father and grandfather. And he was as good as his word. He read plays, or had them read to him, attended rehearsals, and helped some of his—Prince Wilhelm's—ex-favorites to parts to which they were by no means entitled. The programmes were his, the insults offered to modern playwrights were of his making, as was the annual deficit.

In 1890, Ernst von Wildenbruch, known as the author of a tiresome but ultra-patriotic play, "*Die Quitzows*," sprung into sudden prominence at Court. The Kaiser had at last found a laureate "capable of interpreting Brandenburg-Prussian history in dramatic form;" through him he would "talk to his people, recalling the Hohenzollerns' past greatness and foreshadowing deeds of future grandeur."

Wildenbruch became a regular visitor to the Kaiser's study. They planned and declaimed together; the author wrote tirades by the yard after the Kaiser's dictation, and William corrected and improved the manuscript. So "The New Master" was born, a drama glorifying the Great Elector and incidentally suggesting that the Emperor was a man of the same stamp.

It was the first step on the inclined plane. Brandenburg history—written by Brandenburgers—now became the watchword. For, of course, "Wildenbruch is one of us,"<sup>1</sup> else how would he come by his genius?

"At the head of the Wagnerian movement there walked, as it fits, an insane King" (Nordau),—William and Ernst, arm in arm, lead the *avant garde* of German imperial letters.

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<sup>1</sup> Wildenbruch is a grandson of Prince Louis of Prussia and of Henrietta Fromm. The name has previously been borne by the natural offspring of Prussian Princes.

In the annals of our Court, the winter of 1896-1897 lives as the dreadful period of the Emperor's pregnancy with "*Willehalm*," "*Willehalm*" being a festival play, conceived and written by the literary *Zweibund* in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of William I (March 22). There was not a member of the upper household who did not know large portions of it by heart long before its production, so incessantly were the words drummed into our ears. "*Mein Herr Grossvater*," "*Wilhelm der Grosse*," were the sole topics of conversation by Kaiser and Kaiserin, and His Majesty persisted in giving whole pages of monologue and bits of the dialogue at all times, either to point out passages written by himself, or to illustrate the beauty of Wildenbruch's versification improved by him.

The last ten days preceding the festival William divided between attending rehearsals and instructing the chief performers privately at Count Hochberg's Berlin residence. In consequence, my mistress saw little of her husband, save at bed-time, when, she told Countess Brockdorff, he was still full of the grand drama and the trouble he had had with the actors and actresses to make them understand their parts.

There was Fräulein Lindner, for instance, cast to play the "Soul." She had actually smiled at a certain passage of her monologue. "That made the Kaiser wild," declared Her Majesty. "'Fräulein Lindner,' he cried, 'by an expression like that, you are liable to spoil my whole play. The German soul, I want you to understand, is grave, stern, tragic almost. Try to picture it as it is written on my own face. Then you cannot help being successful. And as to your costume, it must resemble a train of thought,—it must be an uninterrupted, flowing line. There must be neither girdle nor corsets.'"

"She will look like the soul of a miller's wife, turned into a big bag of flour," said Princess Feodore of Meiningen, who has inherited some of her mother's wit and all Her Royal Highness's inclination for mockery.

"*Willehalm*" was performed, and seven hundred and fifty of the Kaiser's one thousand invited guests fled before the drama was half over. This festival play, dedicated to the simplest of kings, proved nothing short of Byzantinism run wild. As Louis XI, "least majestic in all his actions, his manners and his exterior, a most ordinary man, dressing like the meanest of the people, who gave audiences seated on a broken-down chair with a dirty cur upon his knees,"—as Louis was the first ruler—not a Roman Emperor—to whom the title of "Majesty" was accorded, so had Bismarck's and Moltke's old master divine honors thrust upon him, though certainly the last to have claimed, deserved, or accepted them.

"Tiresome and grotesque," said the critics; "*meschugge*" (slightly touched) was the dictum of *vox populi*, that did not know how near it came to be *vox Dei*. But His Majesty's friends, who had followed the genesis of this play, shook their heads sadly, and many had resort to the trite phrase: "I told you so." In the Kaiser's deliberate aim to place William I on unsurpassable heights of greatness, they recognized the craving for self-glorification that threw Prussia into political chaos in the fifties and bankrupted the Wittelsbachs twenty-five years later.

"His *Herr Grossvater* be blowed,—it's the present anointed who clamors for recognition as a demi-god," wrote a certain Russian diplomat to St. Petersburg, and I doubt that the situation could have been more tersely expressed. The anonymous correspondents, too, who had become notably reticent since Madame Herbettes's departure, revived their notorious practices, quoting whole pages

from Quidde's "Caligula" in support of the theory that Cesarean madness sat upon the throne of Frederick the Great. Here are some of their deadly parallels:

"Caligula used to call his senators up from bed that they might see him dance. 'Loloki' keeps us all night at the Opera House to hear him declaim about his grandfather's impossible virtues and about the superlative statesmanship of Bismarck's employer, charging us a fat entrance fee in addition."

"Caligula was so crazy on the subject of the theatre that occasionally he took part in the performances himself. 'Loloki' has not yet appeared on any stage, save informally in the concert-room, as band-master, but he turns good actors into spiritless automatons by his drill and interference, and he writes plays, which is worse."

"Caligula owned a thousand different showy dresses, and changed his garments half a dozen times a day. 'Loloki' prides himself upon his arsenals full of different uniforms, and wears out a dozen valets per day dressing and undressing him."

"Caligula was inordinately fond of variety performers, especially indecent ones. Whether he ever commanded army officers and Princes to appear before him in parts such as 'Loloki' ordered the Hereditary Prince of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha and officers of the Guard Fusileers to assume at the smoking concert in the Fusileers' mess during the winter of 1896 is doubtful. Suetonius" (the biographer of the first twelve Cæsars) "gives no news on that point, but then there were probably no Sisters Barrison in the first half of the first century, so that Caligula missed the trick of seeing a royal Prince disrobe and ride a horse woman-fashion."

"The Roman Emperor appointed old soldiers to the most important civil offices. Was Podbielski ever anything

besides 'an old soldier' before 'Loloki' made him Post-master-General?"

"Caligula gave all officials of his Court military rank. 'Loloki' has turned all his goldsticks into martinets."

"Caligula forced parents to witness the execution of their children. 'Loloki,' in oft-repeated speeches, prepares his soldiers for the feast of shooting down or running through their parents, brothers, and sisters."

A witty criticism of the Kaiser's ability as a playwright was passed by the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern in a letter to a friend:

"J'ai vu *Der Neue Herr*  
Hélas!  
Et après *Willehalm*  
Hoh!

In September, *Willehalm* was followed by another festival play, which the Kaiser wrote in conjunction with Captain von Lauff. Produced at Wiesbaden, in honor of the visit of their Italian Majesties, the drama elicited but pathological interest, where it called not for guffaws or pious, deferential wonderment. And according to some members of the Court society permitted to see William's third (or fourth) yet unpublished play, "*Deutscher Michel*," that is another changeling out of wind and bombast, sired by egotism, only more loose-jointed, more rambling, more audacious in the treatment of the "I."



## CHAPTER XIX

George III found a louse on his plate at dinner and ordered his whole household shorn, men and women alike; that was brutal, was tyrannical, and every tyrant has in him the making of a complete egoist. In the case alluded to, the egoist turned madman every few years. Yet, when the royal George first uttered the maxim: "Having no wish save the prosperity of my dominions, I must look upon all who would not heartily assist me as bad men as well as bad subjects," no one had the temerity to say that his excessive love of self was proof of a deranged mind. Frederick William IV thought exactly like George III, but had not stamina enough to act accordingly. His grand-nephew (Ludwig) was his *alter ego* in that respect, and his surviving grandnephew (William), improving on the British ancestor, adopted Caligula's mottoes: "There is but one master, one king," and "Let them hate me, if they but fear me."

The last phrase he used frequently in his public speeches during the first half-dozen years of his reign; after the appearance of Quidde's pamphlet, he dropped both, to avoid odious comparisons, and went back to George's petulant screech: "I wish you well; therefore, if you do not agree with me, as scoundrels and traitors I will flog you into obedience."

Long years of acquaintance with the Kaiser have convinced me that he is morally irresponsible for many of his



countless acts of assumption, injustice, incivility, and brow-beating. He cannot help them. Taking interest in no one but his ego, and viewing society (so far as it does not directly contribute to his momentary comfort) as something not to be reckoned with, he seems to be unconscious of the existence of any one besides himself.

When he goes riding with his wife, and some accident to her mount or harness delays Her Majesty on the road, William proceeds to his destination in the most unconcerned fashion, taking his gentlemen, gendarmes, and grooms with him; neither does he lessen his pace to give Her Majesty a chance to catch up with the party. "Dona" has her own gentlemen and ladies. Let them look after her.

Maybe the Kaiser admires a woman he meets in society, or the wife of a newly-appointed official. He will say so without reserve, extravagantly praising her good points, if she has delicate hands or fine bosoms. That the Empress, upon whose good graces a woman's position at Court largely depends, will turn against the favored one, strike her name from the visitors' list, and give her the cold shoulder, if ever afterward they meet, does not concern him in the least. He seems to think that honor grows again, like hair.

There was *Fräulein* von Böcklin, for instance, who came up to the Kaiser's standard of beauty as the central figure of some *tableaux vivants*, arranged for the benefit of the Paul Gerhard *Stift*, in January, 1891. How he raved about her hands and feet, her arms and shoulders. Photographs of the young lady adorned his study, private bedroom, and the audience-chamber, but *mademoiselle* herself never crossed the threshold of the Schloss or Palais, though Count Eulenburg proposed her for years successively at every festive occasion. Auguste Victoria simply put her foot down, and *Fräulein* von Böcklin's social success was

a thing of the past. Vilma Parlaghy, the painter, experienced something similar. The Kaiser had advertised this woman like a circus, had given her gold medals in opposition to the findings of the Committee on Fine Arts of the Berlin Academy, and, finally, in the winter of 1892-1893, invited her to paint his portrait. She came to the castle, primed for her *chef-d'œuvre*, but what a surprise! The Empress appeared at her husband's side at every sitting and watched madame so closely as to make it impossible for the artist to do herself justice. I have to laugh every time I think of the astonished face Vilma made when I preceded their Majesties into the studio.

That the Kaiser's egotism leads him to regard all state resources as his personal property has already been mentioned. Everything is his. "My army," "my navy," "my ports," "my fortresses," "my funds" (meaning the state treasury), "my minister of war," "my chancellor," are expressions we hear as often as "my horse," "my boys," or "my speech." In the first week of August, 1896, when His Majesty suddenly returned from his Northland trip, an officer of the *Feldjäger*s, whose name I have forgotten, was invited to second breakfast. "*Sehr schneidig*, this Herr Lieutenant," said William to Her Majesty across the table, "but he came near ruining one of my torpedo-boats in trying to catch up with the Hohenzollern, on the way from Maeraak to Bergen. If he damages another of my vessels, he will have to pay for her."

Last year I heard William say at Wilhelmshöhe to his former teacher, Dr. Kius: "Your chief aim must be to inoculate into the rising youth the sentiment that the greatness of the empire depends upon the progressive strengthening of my navy."

There are certainly many reasons why old "Uncle Chlodwig" should be allowed to retire; but who, outside

the inner circle, could guess the chief cause of his retention in office? "The Prince Regent of Bayern and the Kings of Württemberg and Sachsen assume the right to be heard before I select my new Chancellor,—*es ist zu toll*" (it's downright madness). "Next, His Grace of Pymont will undertake to run my government." This is His Majesty's own explanation, which, of course, does not efface the better and more likely one set forth in a previous chapter.

In conformity with his ideas of omnipotence, the Kaiser made his brother-in-law (Adolph) regent for the demented Prince of Lippe, though the King of Sachsen warned him during a visit paid to Berlin *incognito* that the appointment could not stand, the Count of Biesterfeld being the next agnate.

"I told Albert," said the Kaiser to Auguste Victoria afterward, "that Adolph went to Bückeburg upon my orders, that he stays there with my will and consent, and for the rest—I gave him his crown; woe to him who touches it."

This last sentence the Empress read to Countess Brockdorff from her diary; she had put it down as something particularly fine and original, and was much astonished to learn of its historic origin with the old Lombard kings.

"At any rate," she said, recovering from her surprise, "Victoria and Adolph have now something to live on" (the civil list of the principality amounts to nearly a quarter of a million of marks), "and the Kaiser will not be bothered with their finances in the future."

There is still another reason for His Majesty's interference on behalf of Adolph. Prince Frederick of Meiningen, brother-in-law of William's sister Charlotte, married against the Kaiser's wishes, selecting for *beau père* this same Count of Biesterfeld, and persuading the Diet of

Meiningen that his offspring by this lady are perfectly legitimate and capable of succession. Consequently, if the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen should die, the Kaiser's sister would be nobody, and precedence would pass to the *née* Biesterfeld. *Hinc illa lacrima.*

The King of Sachsen was as good as his word, and, as arbiter of the Lippe dynastic imbroglio, decided, in July, 1897, that Adolph must quit. One of the Kaiser's adjutants tells me that, on receiving the news, His Majesty burst out: "I wish Bismarck had never been born. He was the person who persuaded my *Herr Grossvater* against annexing Sachsen in 1866. And now comes this ingrate, whose fortunes rest upon Hohenzollern generosity, and decides against *me*, his sovereign by right, his Kaiser."

Count Biesterfeld, as is customary, announced his assumption of the Regency to the head of the Empire in a formal despatch abounding in high-sounding phraseology and assurances of royal courtesy. Ten, twelve days passed without an answer. Then came hurrying over the wires this message:

"BIESTERFELD, Bückeburg: *Dank für freundliche Mittheilung.*  
"WILHELM, *Imperator, Rex.*"

In the Queen's English: "Thanks for kind information," a phrase that in our tongue is much used in a derisive sense, the word "kind" being synonymous with "gratuitous" in this connection.

"But," said Princess Charlotte, "our sister Victoria is scratching along on a Prussian major's salary just the same" (Prince Adolph of Lippe is Major of Hussars, garrisoned in Bonn).

William's egotism even betrays itself in his generosity. He was fairly beaming with enthusiasm when he informed the Court, after the Paris Bazaar fire, that he sent his

check for ten thousand francs to the Relief Committee. "All the world will talk about it,—can man do more for a national enemy?" spoke his eyes.

In the evening, even before the newspapers had the story, a despatch arrived from Count Philli: "They will haul Your Imperial and Royal Majesty to Paris in a thousand triumphal cars in 1900!" But when, a month afterward, Württemberg was devastated by floods, the Emperor had neither money nor words of sympathy for the stricken ones. And for the military aid, furnished to the inundated Silesians in the fall of 1897, the towns and villages were promptly taxed: so many pioneer troops, so many marks for food, forage, extra pay, and railway fares. The communes protested: "Extra pay is out of the question. What is the use of having soldiers, if they do not come to the citizens' succor freely and without claims for remuneration."

"Don't dispute," wrote back the Minister of War; "the men did extra work, they deserve extra pay." But if five hundred men are ordered to improve His Majesty's hunting-grounds, as they did at Rominton last year, that is called military "exercise," and compensation is out of the question.

In August, 1895, the Court moved to Berlin, and it was given out simultaneously that His Majesty's friend, an English gentleman of the highest connections, would spend some time with us; namely, the Earl of Lonsdale, or Lord Lonsdale as he is usually called, the same with whom the Emperor stayed at Lowther Castle the previous summer. Ah, the stories of English munificence revived by this piece of intelligence! Our Master of the Horse, *Graf* Wedel, estimated that the pleasure of entertaining the Kaiser damaged His Lordship's bank account to the tune of a million marks, or more, and Count Eulenburg, who was not very enthusiastic about that English visit,—while

riding to the hounds near Penrith his hunter threw him, and poor Augustus has been suffering from headaches ever since,—even Eulenburg had only words of praise for the noble Britisher, sentiments which the other gentlemen of His Majesty's suite, Adjutant-General von Plessen and Count Metternich, the latter a Councillor of our London Embassy, fully endorsed. They all expressed a willingness to make it as pleasant as possible for Lord Lonsdale, the only dissenting voice being that of the Empress, who could not forget that Lonsdale had introduced her husband to so many beautiful English women whose praises he sang for weeks after his return.

Lord Lonsdale's invitation was for the Pomeranian manoeuvres; but he was to come a week before their commencement, to get a taste of German town and country life. Theatre parties, parades, excursions by land and water, were planned for the amusement of the great man, and everything pointed toward a round of pleasant days up to a few hours before His Lordship arrived. On that morning my mistress asked me to inspect his rooms and report to her any possible improvement that the House-marshal or housekeeper might have overlooked. I understood that the Englishman was to have Prince Henry's old quarters, and thither I went. To my utter astonishment, I found a number of servants engaged in covering up the furniture and removing flowers and plants.

"What does this mean?" I asked of the head footman.

"His Excellency has just sent word that the lord will be lodged at the Hotel Bristol. So these rooms are to be closed up again."

"Impossible," I said. "Are you sure there is no mistake? Her Majesty knows nothing of it."

"*Gnädigste Gräfin* may believe me that we asked not once, but half a dozen times. Think of the *douceurs* we

are going to miss. It will be a loss of a thousand marks to us footmen alone."

Her Majesty did not know what to say to my information. However, the reception accorded to Lord Lonsdale by the Kaiser and Kaiserin was pleasant enough.

At the Sedan parade, a few days later, we women of the Court looked in vain for Lord Lonsdale. He was to be in the Emperor's suite, but in the long line of glittering uniforms no foreigner was discernible. Finally, one of our Anglomaniacs discovered His Lordship in the second or third row, halting at some distance behind the Emperor, the King of Würtemberg, and a host of small-fry Princes.

At the state dinner, held in the White Hall at 5.30 in the afternoon, the same distinction of rank was ostentatiously upheld; His Lordship had to sit down with a lot of cheap goldsticks and councillors, and when he came to look over his invitation for the grand tattoo in the *Lustgarten*, he found it entitled him to standing room on the Schloss terrace. There the proud Englishman stood with some of his friends from the banquet and a lot of officers' wives and daughters, listening to the music. I never would have believed it, had I not seen him myself. If he had raised his eyes, he could have seen their Majesties of Germany, of Würtemberg, and of Saxony on the balcony above, holding tea-cups in their hands. We were having supper in the state apartments.

I beckoned the House-marshal, Baron von Lyncker, to my side. "Was His Lordship not invited?"

"No."

"But he is our guest."

"Y-e-s," drawled the Baron; "still, here we have several Kings and no end of Royal Highnesses to look after."

"Surely, the Kaiser will be furious at the oversight."

"No oversight, I assure you. If His Majesty had wanted him to tea, as well as the banquet, he would have said so. He went over the list with Count Eulenburg more than once."

In Stettin and during the whole course of the manoeuvres, Lord Lonsdale was treated the same as in Berlin: the Kaiser was charming to him when they met, but their meetings were few and far between, His Lordship being always lodged at some distance from his host's headquarters and depended for his company on anybody but the high-born gentleman who had been his guest at Lowther Castle. He enjoyed the benefits of the imperial livery so far as carriages and mounts went, but the privilege accorded to every guest of distinction at our Court—regular attendance by *Kammerdiener* and footmen of the royal service—was denied him. And why did the Kaiser set the laws of hospitality at defiance?

Shortly before the Englishman's arrival in the capital, William learned from Herr von Zedlitz-Trützschler, Lieutenant in the First Guards, that Lord Lonsdale, when conversation had turned upon the claims of the European nobility, had remarked that he thought himself quite as good as the King of Würtemberg. It happened during the stay of the imperial party at Lowther Castle.

"A simple English nobleman as good as the King of Würtemberg!" cried His Majesty. This insult to a monarch was a direct blow at his self-infatuation. His ego was mightily worked up. "Have the goodness to call Moltke." Zedlitz was dismissed with a wave of the hand.

These were His Majesty's instructions to the adjutant: "Inform Count Eulenburg that during the whole of his stay Lord Lonsdale must be lodged at a hotel. We have room for him neither in the Schloss, nor in the royal castle at Stettin. He is to be treated with the utmost courtesy,



of course, but the fact must not be lost sight of that he is a private gentleman, like Mr. Poultney Bigelow, for instance, nothing more. All Court and military officials must be advised of these instructions at once."

Hence the order to close up Prince Henry's quarters, the snubs at the parade and banquet, the non-admittance to the imperial tea-party and the indignity of hugging-mugging at frowsy hotels in the manoeuvre territory, while the honored guest of Lowther Castle had room for the last of German princelings in his chateaux and hunting-boxes. The ego rages and devours its victims.

A certain Hamburg editor, who spoke disrespectfully of kingship, was also treated to an exhibition of the Kaiser's holy zeal for avenging affronts upon the royal dignity. Like most of his colleagues throughout Europe, the *Hansa-ædter* had printed racy accounts of the King of Belgium's escapades. Thunder and Doria! the paper had scarcely reached Berlin when a suit for *lèse majesté* was brought by the public prosecutor!

"I will prove my assertions," said the journalist.

"Such evidence is inadmissible; the intention to hold royalty up to ridicule and contempt alone counts."

The newspaper man got ten months. It reminds one of Pedro Arbues's dictum: "Innocent or not, let the Jew be fried."

It has been charged that the Kaiser's hostile attitude toward Greece during her late war was primarily dictated by his desire to oblige a handful of Berlin and Frankfurt stock-jobbers; the deal, if there was one, had, of course, nothing to do with the Guelph Fund story, mentioned elsewhere in these volumes, but those in daily attendance upon their Majesties are more correctly informed. If Sophie of Prussia, now Duchess of Sparta, had not become an apostate, and incidentally if my mistress had not insisted

upon horseback exercise and wearing awfully tight corsets during her advanced pregnancy, the Empress would probably have gone her full time with the child subsequently named Joachim. As it happened, the boy was prematurely born during a fit of passion in which Her Majesty indulged upon hearing the news that her sister-in-law was about to embrace the Greek faith. Little Joachim is a weakling, given to epilepsy, and this condition the Kaiser charges to his sister's "bad conduct." *Ergo*, when her adopted country got into trouble, William never stopped to think that by hostile demonstrations he imperilled the throne upon which a Prussian Princess was to sit. His insulted self-love alone had a voice in the politics of the day, and its cry was for revenge. While Her Majesty, whose Lutheran fanaticism is easily aroused, talked of "God's chastisement about to overtake Sophie," William openly avowed that he meant to bring the Duchess of Sparta to her knees. "I will have no rebels in my family," he said. That, while engaged in the pleasant pastime of correcting an obstreperous relative, he had occasion to serve his friend, the Sultan, was an after-thought no less satisfactory to the imperial Captain Bobadil than the opportunities offered for thrusting a thorn into Czar Nicholas's side, for pulling at the heart-strings of venerable King Christian, for enraging "Uncle Bertie," and for giving his mother renewed proof of the full extent of her impotence.

This passion for browbeating, for humbling one's dependents, and for striking terror into the hearts of the weak, is one of the characteristics of Cesarean insanity. It moved Caligula to wild laughter when, looking up from table, he observed two consuls on the other side of the board.

"What may provoke Thy Divinity's mirth?"

"The thought that it requires but a movement of my thumb to have your heads take the place of the boars' on yonder platter."

The craze to "show off" is egoism on its hind legs,—a very different brand from the harmless amusement William finds in pronouncing toasts to his grandmother in the words: "I drink to the health of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, *Chief of my First Guard Dragoons*," or even from the speech the Kaiser made in deposing Count Waldersee as Chief of the General Staff, when he insinuated that, by removing him to the province "where Her Majesty, the Empress, first saw the light," royal honors (instead of a slight) were conferred upon him.

Some of our courtiers excuse all the Kaiser does on the plea of impulsiveness, a condition which they take to be an attribute of genius. Whether his egotistical brutality breaks up a banquet, as it did August 16, 1893, when he drove to the Casino of the Guard Dragoons merely to say that, as Counts Herbert and Wilhelm Bismarck were in attendance, he, the Kaiser, preferred to eat at home, or whether he spoils a family reunion like the one planned for the wedding of *Mademoiselle* von Wedell with Count Bismarck-Bohlen (in February, 1897), when the bride's father was commanded to ask Herbert Bismarck to stay away from his cousin's nuptials as otherwise His Majesty would withdraw his presence,—whether he imperils the future politics of the *Reich* by accusing a Crown Prince to his father, or by making ill-natured remarks about another heir's bride-elect,—these complaisant clawbacks say the sovereign must neither be blamed nor criticized. "*Tel est mon plaisir*," and there is an end of it.

But woe to others assuming like privileges! There was Nicholas, for instance, now Czar of all the Russias, but merely a gay young gentleman when a visitor at our Court

on the occasion of Princess Marguerite's wedding, in January, 1893. No wonder a week of state banquets and parades, and parades and state banquets, made him long for less formal amusements. On the evening of January 27, when the Kaiser and Kaiserin and the rest of the nation's great were expecting His Imperial Highness at the palace of Count Schouvalow, then Russian Ambassador, he sent his regrets, adding that he was enjoying himself so hugely, it would be a shame to break up his party. As we sat down without the guest of honor, William's face was a study: wrath, tempered by surprise, was pictured in every line of it. He showed his annoyance, yet seemed to be incredulous of the slight offered. As Her Majesty expressed it, he thought for a time it was all a joke; that any one in his sober senses should dare to affront him, he refused to believe. However, even before Roman punch was served, everybody in the festive chambers knew that the Czarovitch was at Duke Günther's in the Palais Pourtales, whither he had gone at one o'clock, and where a motley array of rakes, French marquises, and dancing-girls used to convene. They had a great time, those two royal bachelors and their friends, and when, finally, His Imperial Highness's adjutant reminded him that it was necessary to prepare for the supper at the Embassy, Nicholas vowed that he preferred an hour with his Mignon to an eternity with all the German Emperors and Empresses that ever lived. At the concert, I heard Count Schouvalow whisper to his wife: "The Kaiser insists upon reporting this business to the Czar, with all details, the Empress Frederick's protest and my own notwithstanding. As for Duke Günther, he told Her Majesty that he will kick him out of the army."

The Duke of Schleswig, accordingly, got his walking-papers and Czar Alexander a furious letter, complaining of

his son's disregard for the decencies of life and denouncing his proclivities for vice. But twenty-one months later they carried Alexander to the Peter-Paul Cathedral a dead man, and Nicholas, the slurred and despised, mounted the throne of the Northern Empire. The period of uncertainty and anxiety respecting the Russo-German *entente*, that followed, until at last the Breslau meeting was arranged, must be still fresh in the reading public's memory.

The other incident alluded to happened at the banquet held in honor of Li Hung Chang at the Neues Palais in June, 1896. Toward the close of the repast, Gun-charger Rieger, on duty behind the Emperor's chair, handed his master a despatch. To tear open the envelope, read the message, and burst out laughing, was the work of a moment. These strange antics—they must have been strange indeed in the eyes of a Chinese—the Bismarck of the yellow jacket and the three-eyed peacock's feather viewed with wonderment, and William, observing Li's looks, ordered the interpreter to inform the Viceroy that his, the Kaiser's, merriment was caused by the news of an important engagement of marriage. Now Li wants to know everything, whether it be the bottom of a *magnum*, or a family affair. So he sent word that he would be obliged if His Majesty cared to tell him which of his friends had made a fool of himself.

In answer the Kaiser handed the interpreter the telegram. It announced the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Princess Helene of Montenegro.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end, and Li, still puzzling, heard the Kaiser say a few words to Count Eulenburg which made that gentleman laugh even more immoderately than the Kaiser had done. "See what the joke is, and be sure to get a satisfactory answer at last," demanded the Viceroy impatiently.

"The Kaiser"—this was the answer brought back—"told Count Eulenburg that the grandmother of Princess Helene of Montenegro had been a peddler of chestnuts."

What His Majesty really said was this: "*Der ihre Grossmutter hat noch mit Kastanien auf der Strasse vagierend gehandelt.*" (This one's grandmother was but a street vagabond, peddling chestnuts.) His Excellency himself is authority for this corrected version, which he related to Her Majesty and some of her ladies the same afternoon.

The news from Rome was an awful blow to my mistress, for up to then she had never given up hope that Victor Emmanuel would marry her sister Feo. The Kaiser's brutal joke helped her over the embarrassing situation.

"An excellent *bonmot*," she exclaimed; "it shall have a place in my diary."

If the saying had but remained between the covers of that precious volume, the key of which rests on Her Majesty's heart! But it was thought good enough to become a "winged word" among the friends of the imperial couple, and of course found its way to the Quirinal. Since then the alliance between Germany and Italy has practically ceased to exist.

As a flash of genius, too, those amiable pick-thanks praised the Kaiser's feat at Darmstadt (November, 1897), when, standing on the castle balcony with the Czar, he suddenly placed his arm about Nicholas's shoulders, thereby giving Herr Feisler, the imperial photographer-in-ordinary, on watch below, a chance for a sensational snapshot. Feisler promptly turned the negative over to a Berlin speculator, and soon the show-windows offered ocular proof "that the relations between Berlin and St. Petersburg were of the most cordial character." But when the pictures reached Muscovite dealers, ten days later, a decree of confiscation went forth; the photographs were pronounced apocryphal,

and the official telegraph and news companies received orders to "feature this piece of intelligence and give wide publicity to the fact that a fraud had been practised upon the public."

Then there was that greatest of Berlin military spectacles, the annual spring parade on the Tempelhofer Feld (June 1), which in all sorts of weather attracts Berliners by the hundred thousand, besides tens of thousands of visiting foreigners. Last year (1897) the heavens were most considerate,—a beautiful, clear sky, neither excessive heat nor annoying dust,—the masses promised themselves most elaborate pageants. Everybody was quite sure that not only the usual two, but at least three, passings by of the Guard Corps would take place. But the reverse happened. The troops had no sooner filed by their Majesties once, than the Kaiser delivered a short *critique*, and that done, trotted off the field, amid ominous silence and facing a most disrespectful populace. By the time the gala coaches with the ladies of the Court were driven along the lines, however, the sweet plebs had recovered its voice.

"If they can't attend a review together without fighting, let *her* stay at home." "Why did she not get off her horse and into her carriage?" "Next year we will all bring a box of cold-cream along." With such and similar remarks, coined for our benefit, we were bombarded as we slowly wended our way to the spot where Her Majesty's landau was halting.

"Heavens," I said, "they are talking of the Empress!"

"Is it possible?" replied Countess B——, with a little shudder. At that moment, a ragged urchin, riding on the shoulders of a stalwart son of toil, shouted into my ear: "*Hat sie sich wirklich durchgeritten?*" The impudent query was greeted with loud guffaws, and indecent offers of assistance were heard on all sides.

When, finally, we caught up with Her Majesty's suite, the reason for the abrupt ending of the parade was learned. After drawing up in line, the Kaiser had eyed his wife's uniform and accoutrement critically, and missed the special decoration given her by Queen Victoria, portraits of Victoria and Albert, surrounded by a chain of brilliants. He was furious. "How could you lose that precious jewel?" he demanded, disregarding the presence of his adjutants; "next you will drop the Regent<sup>1</sup> in some gutter, and I shall have to make good the loss."

"I do not know," stuttered the Empress. "Frau von Haake fastened it to my breast."

"Haake did? Well, I just long to give her a piece of my mind!" And in order to jump on that miserable maid with as little delay as possible, the puissant war-lord cut in two the proudest military review of the year, to which Princes by the score and all the Ambassadors and Ministers had been invited, while half the town had turned out in its honor! And Paul of Russia was called a madman for running a mile to cane a soldier! The ornament, by the way, was returned by an honest workman, who found it in the grass and who got less than the legal<sup>2</sup> fee as reward, and no recompense for his travelling expenses to Potsdam.

"One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A large diamond, the finest of the Prussian crown-jewels. The crown-jewels are only lent to the incumbent of the throne, who has to make losses good.

<sup>2</sup> In April, 1898, the man brought suit against the imperial treasury on that account. Case yet undecided.

<sup>3</sup> This *mot* from Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" (published 1795) seems to be the original of Napoleon's remark after his return from the disastrous Russian campaign: "From the sublime to the ridiculous, there is but one step."



After chasing, Paul-fashion, from the parade to wrangle with a servant, His Majesty sat down to dedicate a number of Bibles for the new Berlin garrison church, inscribing them as follows:

"I will walk among you and will be your God and you shall be my people." "Ye shall walk in all the ways which I have commanded you." "Without me you can do nothing." He signed each sentence "*Wilhelm, Imperator, Rex*," and omitted quotation-marks, as well as book, chapter, and verse, by which to indicate the origin of the phrases.<sup>1</sup> "They shall stand by themselves as expressions of my royal will," he said to Her Majesty.

In September followed the "divine-appointment" speech at Coblenz, and in December Prince Heinrich's declaration of self-abasement: "I will carry forth the *evangelium* of Your Majesty's sacred person; I will preach it to those who want to hear it and also to those who don't want to hear it." If this be not progressive big-headedness, it would be idle mockery; yet no one acquainted with William and his ways will consider the alternative for a moment. On the contrary, it is a well-authenticated fact that His Majesty has taken Vespasian's death-bed jest—"*Voe, puto deus fio*" (Methinks I am becoming a god)—in bloody earnest from the beginning of his reign. I have now before me a copy of a despatch His Majesty sent to Prince Bismarck from Constantinople on November 9, 1889, all the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, not in the Kaiser's suite on that occasion, having received fac-similes of the message, to keep them posted on the imperial party's progress.

"We had an excellent voyage from Stamboul," says the imperial navigator,— "weather splendid, color-effects and

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<sup>1</sup> The phrases are transcribed from Leviticus xxvi, 12; Deuteronomy v, 33; John xv, 5.

illuminations on land and sea surpassing anything heretofore known. Yesterday the air was so clear, I saw the peaks and the continent of Pelagomes all at once, a sight which never before greeted mortal eyes."

Here we find "Prussia's ally of Rossbach and Dennewitz"—thus His Majesty usually refers to the Almighty—engaged in shifting clouds and manipulating the heavenly lights to give William an unheard-of treat; but with all that, the Kaiser really indulged in unwonted humility by describing his optics as mortal, for in his every-day speech, as well as in public addresses, he claims to be all-seeing. Thus he warned the marines at Kiel, on November 23, 1893, to behave when visiting foreign countries, as his "eye was watching them, whether at home or abroad, by day or by night."

"More wonders," said one of the Emperor's sisters; "I suppose he will next invite Luna to sleep with him, like a certain Roman Emperor, who regarded himself as a god."

In the last week of June, 1897, my mistress received most alarming news from Heligoland. "In the course of some manœuvres," said Count Waldersee's cipher despatch, "the Kaiser narrowly escaped drowning. For God's sake, beg His Majesty to desist from going to sea in heavy weather."

As a matter of fact, there had been no naval exercises; William got a wetting while attempting to cross from the Hohenzollern to the Hamburg Liner Columbia in a raging storm. His unreasonable love for having everything his own way led him to attempt the impossible at sea, as Suetonius tells us Caligula did before him. The Cæsar, we gather from that chronicler, liked to embark during tempestuous weather, "merely to show his prowess and in order to persuade the masses that he exercised a certain influence

over the elements." The people of his household were forced to accompany him, and one of them, named Silanus, was executed for absenting himself from the dangerous outings. It looks almost as if the fear of sharing Silanus's fate (in moderated form) had something to do with Waldersee's appeal to the Empress, for "Uncle Alfred," too, swallowed a bucketful of water on the occasion when William got his fill.

The Kaiser's divine-appointment speech at Coblenz, August 31, was a fitting *résumé* of his claims as God's viceroy, repeated over and over again since that 15th of June, 1888, when, in a "general order," he pronounced the astounding notion that he was "accountable for the army's honor and success to his grandfather," who was then dead one hundred days.

That the "Hohenzollerns took their crown from God's altar," and that "they are responsible to no one but the Almighty,"—how often do we hear this story, how easy would be its denial upon proofs mouldering in royal Prussian archives! According to these proofs, six million of Thalers and ten thousand stalwart bodies of subjects—enlisted, pressed, and stolen—were paid and furnished by Frederick I to the proud Hapsburger before the curtain rose upon the Königsberg comedy, and even then it was half spoiled by the newly-made Queen taking a pinch of snuff just as the ceremonies were at their height! And the man who conducted the negotiations, bought up the Austrian, the *Reich*, the Muscovite, England, and the Pole, and did not succeed in winning over either the Holy See, France, Denmark, or Sweden, the man who actually forged the bauble for which you, oh, William, claim heavenly origin, was Kolbe, *Louis* to Countess Wartenberg, the *Kurfürst's* *mattresse en titre* (but not *de facto*, for very good reasons), a publican's daughter.

The only really new thing in the Coblenz utterances is the statement that the Kaiser's *Herr Grossvater* was "born a king, God's chosen instrument," while as a matter of fact the first William's kingship depended upon his predecessor's much-doubted ability to have an heir.

Happily the couplet proved true which the King of Bavaria<sup>1</sup> is supposed to have addressed to his Prussian brother, and which read :

*"Stammeswandler Hohenzoller—  
Sei dem Wittelsbach kein Groller;  
Zürne nicht ob Lola Montes,  
Selber habend nie gekonnt es."*

The mad Frederick William died without issue, and the *Kartätschen Prinz* (Grapeshot Prince), as William I was styled by his loving Prussians then, mounted the throne.

As for Prince Henry's Kiel speech, the criticisms upbraiding the amiable Heinrich for what he said are as little justified as would be a wholesale condemnation of the phonograph for a false note sung into one of Mr. Edison's machines by a dime-museum tenor. I know His Royal Highness well, and this very knowledge convinces me that the expression "the *evangelium* of Your Majesty's sacred person" did not originate with him. "Sacred person," by the way, is a phrase that occurs frequently in the records of the descendants of the mad Juana of Spain, the Roman-German Emperors Charles V and Rudolph II. Indeed, an anecdote dealing with the latter says that he once admonished his physician, who was trying to locate the

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<sup>1</sup> These verses are in reality by Heinrich Heine, and are altogether untranslatable. The meaning is: "Brother of Hohenzollern,—never having had use for women,—do not blame the Wittelsbach on account of his Lola Montez."

imperial patient's stomach under the quilt, by the thundering words: "Stop, you are touching the holy Roman belly."

To return to Prince Henry. He has never originated anything. A careless, unlettered youth, he spent his first years of manhood as riotously as his slender allowance permitted. To save him from himself, he was married, at the age of twenty-six, to his cousin Irene, an amiable woman, of domestic habits, but without an ounce of *esprit*. "His father," the late Princess of Hohenlohe once said, "was just such a man, but fortunately he had a wife that prodded him on and forced him to acquire knowledge and assume at least a semblance of interest in literature and the fine arts."

Wedlock made of Henry a thoroughly self-satisfied person; he was master of his house, and responsible to no one for his likes and dislikes now, except, of course, such as affected the service. But being devoted to the sea, he takes restrictions of that kind as something akin to the inevitable. As to the relations between the royal brothers, they were never hearty and are frequently strained. Princess Irene and my mistress dislike each other, and the men, quite naturally, take their wives' parts. As a subordinate officer, however, His Royal Highness has always done his very utmost to please the Emperor. While in the family circle the Kaiser is generally spoken of as "big brother," "big cousin," and so forth, Heinrich never fails to designate and address him as "Lord of the Sea," or "High Admiral." He consults him about the merest details concerning his command, and professes to be thoroughly happy only when His Majesty approves of his conduct as a mariner. Twice, or oftener, I heard him say to William during his occasional visits to Berlin and Potsdam: "Do not forget about that speech of mine for the Marine Club

dinner," or, "If you cannot come" (to this or that opening, or naval exercise), "be sure to send me the speech. You can talk it over the telephone and I will have a stenographer ready at the other end to take it down, word for word." Within the knowledge of some male colleagues of mine, the Kaiser, too, was heard to say once or twice: "Now I shall have to telephone the speech Prince Henry is expected to deliver to-morrow. To be the intellectual giant of one's family has its drawbacks."

There lives not a man or woman at Court who does not intuitively feel that Prince Henry's speech of December 15 was conceived and dictated by the person addressed, from the opening words: "Exalted Emperor, Puissant King and Master, Illustrious Brother," to the closing phrase: "Our sublime, mighty, beloved Kaiser, King and Lord for all times, for ever and ever—hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" William wrote it word for word, as he did a dozen other tirades inflicted by his brother upon festive and official gatherings, and if I feared not to ruin the careers of some men in office, I could name people of high standing who saw the manuscript.

In regarding his "mission" of chief arbiter of the world as an *evangelium*, as a revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through him, the anointed mediator, the Kaiser follows a practice established by the majority of, if not by all, victims of insane big-headedness.

When Cæsar conquered Rome, the Senate put him to dine with the gods, and the title of demi-god was inscribed on his statues. He protested against this adulation, but most of his successors, from Augustus to Heliogabalus, demanded that divine honors be paid them. The power-drunk Christian Emperors of the fourth century assumed the title of "Divinity," and even so fanatic a follower of the Prophet as Mohammed Toghlak undertook to improve

upon the Koran in his insane delirium, claiming that, according to an inspiration he had had, the laws contained therein were not severe enough. Ivan the Terrible had a perfect mania for impersonating the spiritual lord. He kept in his *entourage* some three hundred slaves in monk's dress, whose abbot he professed to be, and whose devotions he directed. After laying waste the city of Novgorod, and burning and slaying twenty-seven thousand, that is, nine-tenths of its inhabitants, he collected the survivors at a prayer-meeting, in the course of which he announced that God meant to call the archbishop of the district to account for the blood which had been shed. "The Almighty himself has told me so."

This same Ivan wrote to General Kurbski :

"You threaten me with the judgment of Christ in another world. Is the power of God not also in *this* world? That is a heresy of the Manicheans. You think that God reigns in heaven, and the devil in hell, but that men rule on earth. No, no; the Kingdom of God is everywhere,—in this life as well as in the next."

Ludwig of Bavaria never went half so far as William in the matter of claiming divine inspiration; but that he, too, imagined he held extraordinary relations to the Almighty is evident from the fact that, according to the late Queen Marie's *Hofdame*, he was wont to tell his mother that she had better cease her prayers for him, as he meant to "fight it out with *his* God himself."

Frederick William IV was a devout Christian to the end, but for that very reason, or despite it, he thought himself "God's elect," and "intrusted with the Lord's vicegerency" in *optima forma*. . He considered that he was "responsible to no one but Him, who had placed him in charge of the Prussian flock." "He reigned by divine commission,"—"his crown bore the celestial trade-mark,"—

"he was imbued by the awful responsibility the Almighty had endowed him with,"—really, certain speeches of William II are but echoes of the oceans of vaporous loquacity that kept Prussia in a turmoil from 1840 to 1857.

Every once in a while the Palace is startled by information that somebody—Bebel, Liebknecht, or Richter—will rise in Parliament to denounce the Kaiser in plain and unmistakable language as a madman, or the same intention is imputed to some member of the royal or grand-ducal diets in Munich, Stuttgart, or Carlsruhe. As parliamentary speeches enjoy unlimited immunity, the Kaiser's friends and the various cabinets throughout the Fatherland are ever on the alert to prevent a scandal of that kind, for if the thought now seething in the brains of many were hurled among the masses, the government would be seriously embarrassed, the *Reich's* prestige would suffer immensely, and the catastrophe itself might be very much accelerated. It is an acknowledged fact that the dethroning of the Kaiser's mad relatives plunged the one into hopeless melancholia and exasperated the other so as to drive him to suicide, and as William's mental condition, in its present aspect, appears to be identical with the initial stages of Frederick William's and Ludwig's disease, everything is avoided that would seem like a repetition of the mistakes made in the treatment of those monarchs.

The poor Empress knows nothing of these sad suspicions and fears; to her loving eye the Kaiser's increasing eccentricities are but flashes of genius,—that genius of which he likes to talk to her. She even regards lightly—or as attributes of a kingly sportsman—those physical debilities in William and certain traits in his character which pathology includes among the symptoms of insanity of power,—his tendency to cruelty and his hankering for blood. When I speak of these *stigmata* here, it is not done in an effort to



prove the Emperor insane (such an undertaking would be presumptive on the part of a layman); I merely desire to complete the picture of William II as he is, physically and mentally, by setting down facts and recording observations which it was my privilege and misfortune to experience and witness, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Doubtless the telegrams to the Empress, following in the wake of all imperial hunting excursions, and announcing the number of game killed, are very gratifying from a sportsman's standpoint; but, considering that William's reign yielded not a single act of pardon, or of humane kindness, these records of blood appear the reverse of harmless. It is one thing to measure strength and wits and the velocity of one's own or one's horse's legs with the beasts of the forest, and another to butcher game, released from the pens, by the hundred, as the Kaiser does every fourth day in the year. The Indian Sultan Toghlok once set out with a large hunting-party for the district of Beiram; when he arrived in the territory, he told his attendants he had not come to kill beasts, but men, and "without obvious reason," says his biographer, Ibn Batuta, "he began to massacre the natives. After putting the citizens of a large town to the sword, hundreds of others were given over to the Sultan's elephants, which, throwing them in the air, caught them on knives fastened to their tusks, or trampled them under foot to the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums." That is only one historic example of many, where the hunting fever has developed into murderous frenzy.

During the last five or six years of his life, Ludwig II used to vary the monotony of his exertions for inventing new building projects by studying minute accounts of battles and other gory happenings, and afterward, his brain aflame with visions of blood, he would fall upon a flunky

or chasseur to strangle, bite, cut off his ear, or otherwise maim him. The Bavarians are still paying pensions to royal servants who lost a nose, an eye, a leg, or the use of other limbs, by their master's cruel mania.

Some time ago the Emperor was boasting that he had killed his fifty-thousandth head of game. "When I think of the number of animals in my forests," he added, "I feel like Frederick the Great at Kolin when he shouted to his squadrons: 'Dogs, would ye live forever?' I hope to double and treble my shooting record during the next ten years. If a King cannot go to war, he must be content with practising in the forest. It keeps one in fighting trim, anyhow."

I talked about the foregoing with one of the physicians who attended His Majesty's late cousin. "I did not know that the Kaiser was infatuated with the chase," said the doctor, "but might have guessed it, as the character of his speeches portends an unmistakable craving for blood. His constant references to war, his incessant admonitions to the army that it must die for him, his abominable, oft-repeated summons to the soldiers to hold themselves in readiness to slaughter their parents, brothers, and sisters with gun, sabre, or lance, are analogous to the ravings I heard from the lips of Ludwig time and again. My late patient frequently spent whole days in devising new tortures for imaginary culprits, and the signing of death-warrants (most of them fictitious) gave him rare pleasure."

How the Emperor feels about signing death-warrants, I do not know. I know only that he signs every one submitted to him, and that in all writs of execution, issued since Emperor Frederick's demise, there occurs the phrase: "His Majesty having refused to interfere, the delinquent is to die by the sword," etc. Like most selfish persons, William is hard-hearted, and never pardons anybody, save duellists

or officers punished for exceeding their authority. He approves of insane big-headedness even in others. Previous to the William the First celebration, many thousand petitions arrived in the Kaiser's mail, but His Majesty, being busy with the preparations for "*Willehalm*," refused even to see the extracts and recommendations which the Minister of Justice had prepared from the papers sent in. "I have no time for miscreants," he said to Herr von Lucanus: "let a few men suffering for defending their honor, sword or pistol in hand, be picked out and I will set them free. As for the rest, they must take their medicine." When Professor Mommsen declined the title of "Excellency," it was whispered in the Palace that His Majesty's refusal to interfere on behalf of the numerous writers and authors imprisoned for their political convictions prompted the scientist; but, as a matter of fact, Mommsen acted on the score that it would be absurd to accept honors at the hands of a crazy person.

The Munich medical man already quoted went on to say that consultation with the Emperor's physicians convinced him that William was very much like Ludwig in respect to physical ailments and their consequences. "Like the Kaiser, my old master was possessed of an abnormal fear of illness, and the very thought of bodily pains as the result of indisposition, a dental operation, for instance, unmanned him." To his nervous condition the doctor attributes Ludwig's general cowardice.

*Au fond* the Kaiser is a courageous man. I had occasion to verify that at the review of the Second and Third Guard Lancers on Bornstädter Feld in May, 1892, when his mount, a high-stepping stallion, excited by the presence of so many other horses, bolted twice and could scarcely be kept under rein. The Empress and Prince Henry, who had come over for the day, urged His Majesty again and again

to change horses (there is always a second in reserve); but he refused to be persuaded, and all of us passed a dreadful hour, expecting every minute to see the sovereign become a victim of his obstinacy. At the Berlin riot of 1891, he displayed a valiant spirit, but at times, when suddenly confronted by danger, his nerves become unstrung, and the Prussian eagle, *nolens volens*, flaunts the white feather.

Members of the *entourage* who accompanied His Majesty to Proeckelwitz in June, 1892, tell a saddening story to the point. It appears that His Majesty commanded his host, Count Dohna, to fetch him from the station with a double team of royal blacks, which he had admired on a previous visit. William took a seat on the box at the side of His Lordship, who was driving, and everything went well until the drag turned into the village street, where the horses shied at the patriotic chants of a peasant's chorus; and who would blame them? Seeing the capers of the *carossiers*, these harmless folks doubled their enthusiasm, and to bring matters to a climax one of them waved a flag. Now the leaders rose on their hind legs, the cross-pieces got loose and began knocking against their pasterns, and off they were at a furious rate. Dohna, with keen presence of mind, let the reins of the runaways slip and hung the more forcibly onto those of the shaft-horses, which, of course, tried to follow the others. He let them run for a while, but without entirely losing control, and as they were about to plunge into a bed of harrows, with teeth exposed, he succeeded in checking the team. A gallop of a couple of hundred yards on freshly-ploughed ground finished the blacks, and from there to the castle they went steadily.

The Kaiser put his arm around his host when the horses started off, and when the danger was past pressed Count Dohna's hand, but did not say a word. When the drag arrived at the manor-house, he had to be helped down

from his seat. The ladies, who received His Majesty at the door, say that his face was deadly pale and his lips compressed. Their greeting and congratulations he did not seem to observe, but crept to his room, assisted by his *chasseur* and adjutants.

When, an hour later, he appeared at dinner, he had not yet recovered his speech, and after vainly endeavoring to swallow a spoonful of soup, rose and retired, supported by Dr. Leuthold, who allowed no one to see his patient. The Kaiser missed breakfast, but attended luncheon, still looking pale and haggard. Then, for the first time, he greeted the ladies of the house and spoke a few words to his host, but when a sprightly young miss at table referred to the accident, he bade her keep silence by an imperious gesture of the hand, while a tremor seemed to run through his body. He would not hear of going to the chase, and left next day for Berlin without having fired a shot.

It is said that the Kaiser had an epileptic fit after retiring from table on the night of the accident; feeling the premonitory symptoms of *grand mal* the moment he entered the dining-room, he withdrew after making a show at doing the polite thing. As warnings, in the shape of certain peculiar sensations, up to a short while ago, always preceded his spells, it has been possible to restrict the knowledge of the Kaiser's affliction to his family circle, the highest officials, and to members of the household.

Aside from the Proeckelwitz case, which lacks confirmation, as the attending physician, quite naturally, refuses to be quoted, I know of only two incidents where news respecting the Kaiser's sufferings from that dread malady leaked out. In the midsummer of 1891, some two weeks before their Majesties went to England, the Kaiser was found in his dressing-room at the Neues Palais, lying unconscious across a fallen arm-chair, which he had knocked

down in toppling over. The chambermaid Amelia discovered her master when, receiving no answer to repeated knockings, she had entered the room in pursuit of her duties. You may imagine the hubbub that ensued. The girl, not satisfied with alarming the men-servants, brought all the women, from Empress to scullion, to the scene by her lamentations. At first the cry went forth that His Majesty had been murdered; simultaneously the theory of suicide was advanced, and when, finally, the doctors arrived, they found two of the wardrobemen engaged in pouring cognac down the patient's throat. As old cognac of the twenty-five marks a bottle brand is always kept in the Emperor's private rooms to liven him up when he feels faint, the servants thought they were doing the correct thing and were inconsolable on hearing of the danger involved by such heroic treatment. However, as at the same time they had opened the Kaiser's locked teeth and pulled his tongue into place, they had done something to relieve the poor man.

The other attack happened at the Berlin Schloss, also in the Kaiser's own chamber and in the presence of one of his wardrobemen. The attending physical circumstances were the same, and so was, curiously enough, the explanation to the household by Court-marshal Count Eulenburg: "His Majesty has a peculiar way of throwing himself backward into an arm-chair," said His Excellency to the heads of departments, who are expected to disseminate the information received at head-quarters among the members of their staff,—“he throws himself into a chair with full force, and under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that a *fauteuil* breaks down under him occasionally.” The Emperor himself, after each stroke, talked at table of the *verfluchte*, worm-eaten chairs that were considered good enough to be placed in his chamber. The idea that any

Court-marshal should assign infirm pieces of furniture to William-the-Spendthrift is too preposterous to admit of discussion. Lately, I am told, the Kaiser's malady has taken a more aggravated form, the premonitory sensations having ceased. The *falling-sickness* comes upon him suddenly nowadays, and, as in the two instances noted, he lapses into insensibility without a moment's notice when *grand mal* takes hold of him. His Majesty is therefore at present in more imminent danger of suffering injury by the falls peculiar to the disease than ever before, and as a precautionary measure all porcelain vases with cut flowers have been removed from his rooms, the order including even the massive silver receptacles the Empress gave her husband for a birthday present. Two of them, filled with the choicest flowers, stood formerly on the Kaiser's desk, and two more on the centre-table of his dressing-room. My mistress had a good cry when *Kammerdiener* Brachwitz told her they had been locked away by order of Count Eulenburg, who was acting on the advice of the body-physician.

I can add but little to the statements concerning the Kaiser's health, made in other parts of these volumes. His ear trouble is increasing, and Her Majesty, who is as fond of fresh air as Queen Victoria, is much concerned about the foul atmosphere that gathers constantly in the Kaiser's study and dressing-room, or wherever he stays in-doors for any length of time. The belief that this local disease is a carcinomatous growth received a new impetus from the fact that the Grand Duke of Baden's sufferings have been diagnosed as cancer. His Royal Highness, it will be remembered, is the husband of a Prussian Princess, granddaughter of Queen Louise, and sister of the late Frederick III, the Kaiser's sire. Both Queen Louise and Frederick died of cancer, and the physicians hold that

the Grand Duchess Louise transmitted the curse to her husband, as that other Prussian Princess, more directly, carried insanity into the House of Wittelsbach. A great storm was raised in October, 1897, when the Czar and Czaritza, then staying in Darmstadt, refused to receive the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess on the plea that their time was all taken up. "Nicholas must *make* time for the daughter of the venerable William I," cried our papers. Their Russian Majesties were exceedingly amused by these vaporings, as a member of Prince Hohenlohe's household tells me. The Chancellor was visiting at Darmstadt at the time of the controversy.

"That the Czar *must* do a thing, despite his disinclination," said Nicholas to His Grace, "is an argument worthy of the 'nation of thinkers.' However, I value my health above the approval of united *Deutschland*. Their Royal Highnesses may charge my refusal to see them to the man who invented kissing as part of the exchange of royal salutations. I would not kiss the Grand Duke or Grand Duchess for all the gold in Siberia, ay, all Siberia's gold ready mined and coined, and, God knows, Russia needs yellow metal badly enough."

And now, to quote the master-mind who wrote of the last of the kings: "All I had to say" (of William II) "is finished,"—all, or nearly all. I must, however, not close this part without setting down a certain fact to clear the memory of a virtuous Princess, who died the death of a martyr in that awful Paris holocaust of May, 1897, just as her thirtieth year of martyrdom drew to a close. I refer to Sophie, Duchess d'Alençon, daughter of Duke Max of Bavaria, a younger sister of that Queen of Naples who, while unfurling her hapless standard on the ramparts of Gaeta, made the world forget the nameless cowardice and brutal stupidity with which her husband had reviled his



crown. She was a younger sister, too, of her called the Niobe of Queens, poor Elizabeth of Austria. How Princess Sophie died, every one knows: giving the right of way to the humblest attendants of the great charity bazaar, encouraging the terror-stricken, raising and aiding the fallen to escape.

It is said that one's whole life kaleidoscopically passes before the mind at the moment of death. As Princess Sophie was on her knees, expecting to be consumed by the flames surrounding her on all sides, how she must have suffered at the remembrance of that summer day in 1867, when her royal betrothed branded her as an outcast and kicked her marble bust down the grand staircase of Hohenschwangau as she entered the vestibule of the castle, attended by a brilliant suite. Ever since then the jilted Princess has been held up as the type of a wanton born in the purple. That "on the eve of her marriage to King Ludwig she was pregnant by a gardener's assistant," "that the father of her child—an uncouth boy—was packed off to America,"—these and more details were discussed as openly and shamelessly as might be the capers of a ballet-girl, or a salacious police-court scandal. When, a year later, one of the Orleans Princes led her to the altar, public opinion vouchsafed "he had been well paid for shutting his eyes," and finally, when King Ludwig's mind gave way, it was charged "to that wicked Princess who had first shattered his dreams of ideal love and made him hate womankind." It was all in conformity with the dictum that the King can do no wrong, and when, in the very end, that sorry Majesty changed his robes for a strait-jacket, "it was too late for the official vindication" of a woman who had suffered for a life-time in the interest of what Richelieu called *raison d'état*.

The diary of the late Queen Marie's *fille d'honneur*, from which I am quoting, tells the true story, as the Queen

gave it to her attendant with streaming eyes. "Princess Sophie," said the pious mother of the mad King, "was as innocent of the terrible charge as a newly-born babe. Far from being intimate with any man, she was one of the purest creatures that ever lived. The story of her wrongdoing was a vile hallucination engendered in Ludwig's morbid mind, and was published with unwonted brutality to shield the fact that the King refused to marry,—refused Sophie, as he would have refused an angel come from heaven, the Virgin herself," refused, it may be added, on account of his perverted sexual taste. Ludwig had become a man-loving *Eve's-son* overnight, as Gustavus Adolphus's celebrated daughter, Queen Christine, developed into a woman-worshipping *Adam's-daughter*,—" *anima mulieris in corpore virile*,"—a condition that is not very rare by any means (Tardieu, Lacassagne, Krafft-Ebing, and others mention large groups of similar cases). But inasmuch as homo-sexual passions and perversion of sexual taste characterize the degenerate and the candidate for insanity, the King's councillors concluded that it would not be politic to tell the truth about the breaking of the marriage engagement. And so the most abominable slander that can be put upon a woman was allowed to go forth and blast the life of this royal maid, who, in the interest of the House of Wittelsbach, kept silent.

And her mother kept silent, her sister the Empress, her sister the Queen, her brother the scientist—all did; cousins, brothers-in-law, aunts, and uncles, the rulers of Europe, all combined to disgrace her; all, by their guilty silence, helped to spread the report of her alleged infamy. "The King can do no wrong;" *ergo*, the King's cousin must be morally murdered that the King may follow his mad passions!

Ludwig's brother Otto, the present King of Bavaria, is afflicted with the same moral *stigmata* that led his relative

to write love-sick *billets-doux* to grenadiers and induced him to treat his troopers to wine mixed with cantharis. And both Majesties' cousin, the Kaiser, is not wholly exempt from peculiarities that have been classed as hypertrophy of the passions. William is a slave to *amour fétichiste*. Beautiful hands are the objects of his devotion.

All the women the Kaiser ever loved were noted for the delicacy, whiteness, and perfect proportions of their hands. His admiration for Madame Herbette is said to have begun and ended at her slender finger-tips. But since Her Majesty's jealousy and the anonymous letter fiends weaned him of woman's society, this fancy, at first a mere weakness, has abnormally increased.

Affecting a general disregard of woman, as has been his wont for the last two or three years, the Kaiser of late flatly refuses to notice any lady he meets in society beyond a mere recognition, unless she has fine hands. If she satisfies his idea of beauty in this one respect (she may have the nose of a Kalmuck, be chicken-breasted or hump-backed), he will draw her into conversation, compliment her, and, on going away, kiss her hand,—once if under fire of scrutinizing eyes, half a dozen times and oftener when unobserved. I have frequently been obliged to advance silly excuses when hearing His Majesty criticised for wearing many rings on his fingers. The truth is, most of those jewels are duplicates of ornaments he noticed on female hands while admiring and fondling them.

Of course, it is obligatory at Court to wear gloves, and Her Majesty, who is not blessed with an exquisitely-shaped hand, insists upon it that this *usage* be strictly observed, but at supper, after a ball, hop, or concert, the Kaiser always asks certain ladies of his household and of society to remove their gloves. "I have as little use for a gloved hand and arm as for a veiled lady in a redingote," he said once.

"A funny simile,—where does the redingote come in?" cried Princess Feo of Meiningen.

"It stands for the arm-covering, *Du Naseweis*" (you know-all).

The Kaiser, you must know, while addressing his devotions first and above all to pretty hands, is enchanted when a finely-modelled arm crowns the *chef-d'œuvre*. He is not very generous, but he can be quite munificent when selecting presents for women with fine hands and arms, even if the gifts are semi-obligatory ones. When brooches or breast-pins are distributed, His Majesty takes no interest in the ceremonies, but rings and bracelets he likes to put on himself.

One of the titled ladies of the household describes the mode of her "decoration" by the Emperor as follows: "He bade me to be at the Schloss (the Court was staying at Potsdam then), on a certain day at two o'clock in the afternoon. I had to come veiled to prevent possible recognition.

"When I entered His Majesty's private room, he was standing in the middle of the chamber. His face was not so pale as usual. 'Take off your veil and coat,' he said, and until I had complied with his command his manner expressed impatience. I wore a waist with elbow-sleeves garnished with long lace. 'This is excellent,' said the Kaiser, as I pulled off my gloves. He went to the alcove and selected from among several jewel-boxes one of formidable size. From it he took a bracelet in the form of a snake, and, drawing it out to its full length, placed it around my arm. It extended over the elbow. I thanked the Kaiser, and he kissed my arm again and again between the golden circlets, and what struck me as peculiar," concluded Her Ladyship, with an innocent giggle, "was that His Majesty held my little finger in his hand all the time."

Poor, vain creature! she thought, and she thinks to-day, that she saw the *première* of this comedy and that the imperial stage-manager shelved it after this one performance. Yet there are dozens of women and girls in Berlin and Potsdam, in Kiel and Breslau and Königsberg, hugging similar trophies of royal favor, but all are not chatterboxes.

A little while ago I was admiring a new-fashioned sleeve which had just been perfected in the Empress's millinery rooms. It belonged to an evening demi-toilet, and was slashed in half a dozen places on and under the arm. "It's very novel," I said, "but what an amount of work! These slashes are as carefully sewed as button-holes."

"Ah," smiled the simple-minded seamstress, "our papa" (meaning the Emperor) "must always have space for his kisses. If you once give him a finger, he wants the whole arm."

The Emperor never forgets a hand after he has seen it once, a circumstance which keeps Her Majesty in a turmoil of jealous rage. Sometimes, when they drive out together, William interrupts her conversation to say: "Dona, look at that woman's hand. I mean the lady who came out of So-and-So's store. It is worthy of a sculptor."

As the Kaiser watches the women pass, and those at the windows and in carriages, he finds occasion to repeat this sort of comment more than once. Really, one can quite understand the Empress's wrath.

Of late, William has taken to chiromancy, and Heron-Allen's nonsensical "Manual" fights on his desk for the place of honor with Captain Mahan's "Sea-Power." Sometimes, when he quotes the Englishman's gems of thought on "spatulate," "artistic," "philosophic," or "psychic" hands, Her Majesty fails to exhibit that breathless interest which the Kaiser thinks due to all his utterances, and then he reminds her that Louis XIV thought quite as much of

pretty hands as he does. Of course, that disarms Dona's critical judgment, for whatever *le Grand Monarque* has done is worthy of imitation in her eyes. Yet a little research would show Her Majesty that William is stretching the truth, for the Duchess of Orleans, who is his authority, expressly states that Louis's passion for hands awoke only "because God threw nuts in his way when he no longer had teeth to crack them with."

"It's almost pitiable to see the old sinner fondle the dainty fingers of Mademoiselle de N——," she wrote to the Queen of Prussia in 1704. Louis was then sixty-six years old.

I need hardly tell you that the Kaiser does not actually believe in this humbugous chiroscopy; he affects the fad merely to have an excuse for examining women's hands.

Apropos of this idiosyncrasy, Court gossip has this to say: When William was fourteen, his mother took him to a London woman physician, and made him submit to a most trying examination, as she feared that, like Frederick William IV, the boy was not normally developed. For a full hour the Prince was felt over, kneaded, and sounded by Madame Æsculap, and when finally he got away from her, he said to the servant who assisted him at his toilet: "This lady has hands like an angel, the most beautifully sensitive hands in the world."



# THE KAISERIN





## CHAPTER I

It was in the summer of 1879, when Prince Bismarck, the great and correspondingly rude Chancellor, "politely asked and brutally coerced" the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, the same man he had done so much to lower, to send his eldest daughter to Berlin, "his sovereign desiring to see whether or not the young woman seemed likely to make a healthy wife and mother." The question involved was really one raised by the Chancellor himself. Having been unable to prevent the "English match"<sup>1</sup> between the Prussian Crown Prince and the British Princess Royal, with its alleged sorry consequences,—the tainting of the pure Brandenburg blood by that of the scrofulous Guelphs,—he was determined to select for the heir-presumptive a bride physically fit to propagate the royal race in the honest native fashion, that is not easily frightened by numbers.

The young Princess came, was viewed by the doctors, who, conforming with Louis the Fifteenth's maxim for the selection of royal wives, "examined her carefully from head to foot, forgetting nothing it was possible to see," and—conquered. And the same Bismarck, who a few years before had set a price upon her father's head, was

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of this marriage (1858), Bismarck had already entered upon the diplomatic service of Prussia, and had great influence with the Prince of Prussia, afterward William I.

instantly at her feet, for Victoria (the Auguste was added much later) had done Prussian diplomacy a great service. Not only was the probability of another British alliance by marriage now happily precluded, but the union between a Hohenzollern and a member of the discrowned House of Schleswig would also go far toward pacifying the latter and its branches in Russia and Great Britain. But in all other respects, save that of conspicuous natural aptitude for motherhood, the young girl proved a disappointment. She was awkward, plain, and presumptuous in a quiet way,—presumptuous with that hateful arrogance that distinguishes the “beggar on horseback,” as her future *belle-mère* used to say.

When Her Highness arrived at the Wildpark Station, which is only five minutes' walk from the Neues Palais, where her intended husband's parents, afterward Emperor and Empress Frederick, resided, several baggage-wagons awaited her, besides a royal coach. But there was scarcely a need for the vans, sent according to a custom of the Prussian Court. Indeed, all the Princess's belongings might have been carted to the Schloss on a wheelbarrow, for a rickety old trunk and a shawl-strap sufficed to hold her wardrobe, consisting of one costume each for the house, for dinner, and reception, besides the clothes she had on her back. The late Empress Augusta's Palace Dame, Countess Hacke, saw the outfit, and reported its paucity to the sovereign lady, not in an unfriendly spirit, but rather in support of Her Majesty's ideas respecting the annexations of 1864 and 1866. The old Kaiserin had no sympathy with the politics that led to the discrowning of the three Princes, near relatives at that, and the invalidation of the “Augustenburger's” rights. Indeed, I happen to know that, up to the very day of her death, Her Majesty never really ceased abhorring Bismarck as a rampant sacrilegist,

and time and again she told me that the double marriage between the Houses of Schleswig and Hohenzollern was her work, the Iron Chancellor's claims that he himself found and selected the "Holstein," notwithstanding. And when we come to consider it, it was eminently a woman's notion of "make-peace," this offer to compensate Duke Frederick for the loss of sovereignty by elevating his expatriated Princesses to positions of puissance and affluence,—one to be heiress to the German diadem, the other to become the wife of a princely Croesus, Frederick Leopold of Prussia. Bismarck caught at the suggestion not because he admired its spirit, but because the Empress handled it so cleverly as to make him think it was an idea of his own, and he agreed to it the more readily, as the royal girls seemed to answer his requirements as to physical fitness.

The man who drew up the marriage-contracts of Victoria and her sister died only a few years ago, and I have the story of the extraordinary proceedings from his own lips.

It appeared from his statements that the Prince of Augustenburg, who in 1863 assumed the title of Frederick VIII of Schleswig, had been reduced to abject poverty by his candidacy. After the peace of Nicholsburg, July 26, 1866, he retired to Coburg. He took a mean little house in that cheapest of Continental capitals, his wife and daughters made their own dresses, and the children were sent to public-school with the offspring of mere commoners, as the Duke could not afford a private tutor. Still, Frederick did neither forego his hopes of future greatness, nor did he tire of agitating all sorts of schemes for the re-establishment of his government, until, finally, the Empress Augusta and Queen Victoria combined their efforts to induce King William toward a compromise. Their endeavors proved

successful, as the King was anxious to have the Schleswig-Holstein question settled for good. Accordingly, a commission was appointed to which both the Hohenzollerns and Holsteins sent representatives.

Then and there it was that Duke Frederick waived all claims to and all rights in the Elbe duchies for the privilege of gaining two important sons-in-law,—the heir of the Red Prince, leader in the war of 1864, who drove him from his country, for his second daughter; the eldest son of Crown Prince Frederick William, who, by the victorious battle of Königgrätz, struck the name of Augustenburg from the list of sovereign houses, for Victoria. And as if that had not been sufficient to stamp these unions *mariages de convenance*, it was further stipulated that His Highness should not be obliged to furnish his daughters with a *dot*.

The day after Princess Victoria's inauspicious arrival at the Neues Palais, the Crown Princess happened to give a garden-party to the poor children of the neighborhood, when they were treated to chocolate and cakes and music and condescension; cheap things, it is true, but highly appreciated. Victoria had to assist in this charitable enterprise, and did so with good grace, for everybody's eyes were upon her; but when, at last, the children were dismissed, she ran to her apartments in hot haste, and, calling her maid, cried: "Off with this dress, quick, I am afraid I smell of poor people!"

Most probably she did, poor thing! I know I did, although I had not fondled half so many babies between the ages of one and four years as Her Highness; but the expression of disgust was nevertheless in bad taste, and exceedingly impolitic besides, for Victoria's attendant was an *attaché* of the royal household and forthwith blabbed about the incident in the "flunkies' own." And, like the vaporous thing it is, a story once descended to the kitchen

floor, quickly rises again to higher regions by virtue of its insignificant specific weight.

Prospective father-in-law "Unser Fritz" did not know whether to be angry or amused when the remark was repeated to him bright and early next morning by his valet; but the Crown Princess flew into one of her good-sized rages "at the impudence of the girl, whose petty pride," she said to her *intimus*, Count Seckendorff, "recalls those caricatures of royalty depicted in the memoirs of the Margravine of Baireuth. When I encounter such conduct in my adopted country," added Her Imperial Highness, "I always repeat to myself the words my ancestor, George III, appended to his first, minister-made address to the House of Commons: 'Born and educated in England, I glory in the name of Briton.'"

The purveyor of home scandal to Prince William was of course as alert in bringing the matter to his master's notice as the rest of the liveried washerwomen, but the young *Rittmeister* of Hussars, much against his wont, cut short the fellow by an impatient shrug of his shoulder, leaving him much in doubt whether he disapproved of gossip concerning his intended or shared the Princess's horror of poor folk.

Poor folk, indeed! The ducal family of Schleswig had one foot in the bankruptcy court for tens of years, and would be there still, head over heels, had not Prussia, in 1885, allowed its chief an annual pension of seventy-five thousand dollars. Previous to this settlement upon the Augustenburgers, and especially during the life-time of Duke Frederick, the unhappy pretender, they were in a really pitiable position for people in their station of life, residing alternately in Kiel, Coburg, and Dresden; that is, wherever their creditors would let them remain for any length of time.

About the first meeting between William and his wife a pretty story is told by many of the Kaiser's semi-official biographers. According to these accounts, it was at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Castle, that William first saw his future wife, when both he and Victoria were visiting their uncle, Prince Christian. If the word "met" were substituted for "saw," this version would be substantially true. As a matter of fact, the Princess was seated in a second-tier box of the Dresden Opera House with her father and mother, and was surrounded by retail merchants, small officials, and the like, when His Royal Highness accidentally noticed her. His adjutant desired to introduce him, but William refused "to mix with the *canaille*," a thing that could not be avoided if he climbed the stairs to pay his compliments to the ducal family. The Augusten-burgers heard of the remark, which at the time drew forth no end of comment at the Court of King Albert, and some of the august personages in that capital think the present Empress then and there experienced a change of heart which made her despise her own and every other lowly position; but while I will not dispute the fact that William's disdainful epigram made an impression on the untutored and ambitious Princess, I am convinced there was scarcely occasion for a reversal of sentiments: the daughter of Duke Frederick inherited her spleeny self-exultation from her mother as directly as the Kaiser did not get his either from his parents or grandparents.

The young Princess's arrogance was a topic of general conversation in Berlin long before her marriage, and caused disgraceful scenes at the time of her ceremonious entry into the capital on the wedding-day. As her splendid coach of gold, drawn by eight horses, rolled slowly through the Brandenburg gate amid the shouts of loyalists, small bands of riffraff jeered the future Empress with ribald reproaches.

"Another of the Augusta type" (meaning the well-hated spouse of William I),—"all bones and skin," they said.

"Just look at her dress,—one Thaler a yard!" This from the women.

"Pshaw!" vociferated another, "her costume was cut from one of Queen Victoria's cast-off petticoats!"

"That lace shawl," growled a lung-strong individual, "is surely an heirloom from the Hohenlohes; the Augustenburgers would never have been able to buy it."

"You mean, to owe for it," sneered several neighbors of the speaker.

The denizens of the Prussian capital have always held their Queens in the utmost contempt; even the greatest, or the only great one, Louise, was treated with jeers and derision almost up to the day of her fatal illness. Her many virtues and great good sense were not recognized until many years after she had been put to rest in the Charlottenburg mausoleum.

The remarks provoked guffaws of derision, and it looked for a while as if the proud procession would end in anything but glory; but the police soon intervened, and, by packing off a few of the lampooners of decayed royalty, cut short what promised to be a repetition of the ordeal that Carmen Sylva faced upon her arrival at Bucharest.

The lesson taught Princess William by these incidents was, however, not lost upon the young lady. During the first few years of her marriage, Her Royal Highness succeeded admirably in living up to her income, and not beyond it, but as early as 1885 (her nuptials were celebrated in February, 1881) good old Emperor William I was forced to send his Minister of the Royal House, Herr von Schleinitz, to his granddaughter-in-law to protest, in the interest of the exchequer, against her wanton extravagance.



"His Majesty desires me to recall to Your Royal Highness the fact that his own father and mother were compelled, after ascending the throne, to get along on the puny revenue allowed them during the life of Frederick William II," said this dignitary. "For ten years and more, Frederick William III and Queen Louise managed on a ridiculously small income in order to pay off the most pressing of their royal predecessor's debts. Queen Louise, the present Emperor's mother, who was having children in just such quick succession as you, madame, received scarcely one-fifth of the pin-money Your Royal Highness is allowed to draw, yet she never ran into debt, or lacked that dignity in outward appearance that the first lady of the land should command. Indeed, contemporary writers pronounced Queen Louise one of the best-dressed women of her time and a leader of fashion in the best sense."

"But," protested Princess William, "we are writing 1885 now, not 1797."

"All that has been considered, Your Royal Highness," said the Minister, respectfully but firmly, "and His Majesty, my exalted master, has come to the conclusion that things cannot continue in the style Your Royal Highness pleases to adopt. Once more the Empress Augusta, despite urgent calls for charity upon her purse, will come to your aid, but both their Majesties warn you that it will be for the last time. If you persist in living above your income (these are His Majesty's final words), the Minister of the Royal House will assume charge of your allowance and expenditure, and" (Herr von Schleinitz lowered his voice) "Your Royal Highness will not have twenty marks a month to bless yourself with, for the administration will absorb the entire revenue allowed Your Royal Highness by the grace of their Majesties of Germany and of England."

Herr von Schleinitz's words, here for the first time truthfully recorded, foreshadow to a certain extent the dangerous game Prince William played in the winter of 1888, when he tried to supersede his father, the amiable Frederick III that was to be, by brushing him aside with an ephemeral weapon, dug from musty state archives by the clever hand of Bismarck: "No Hohenzollern suffering from mortal malady shall be eligible to the crown," so it was proclaimed.

Who made that so-called house-law, or by what process of reasoning it became binding on the successors of the mythical originator, has never been positively settled. It was there one fine day, and the semi-official press gave it the benefit of its most ponderous type after the *Reichsanzeiger* of November 12, 1887, had pronounced the Prince Imperial's illness as cancer.<sup>1</sup>

"But my husband is not a sure candidate for death," cried the Crown Princess, when Professor von Bergmann endeavored to break the news to her.

"Your Imperial Highness is pleased to deceive yourself," said the doctor, blunt and cruel as German savant ever was; "as we feared, the blood of the Georges has done its worst."

Down came an imperial hand upon the professor's cheek, and with the fierce outcry: "Take this for your lying insolence," the Crown Princess threw open the folding-doors separating the anteroom from the corridor in the San Remo villa by a vigorous kick of her foot. Bergmann found

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<sup>1</sup> A note of a later date, by Countess Eppinghoven, says that Prince Bismarck, in February, 1892, denied before a tableful of dinner guests that this publication in the official gazette, for which he was responsible, was of political significance. He also denied, then and there, that a house-law like that quoted exists. The Countess thinks the house-law agitation originated with Prince William or his friends.

himself outside, and after this scene, Sir Morel Mackenzie assumed undisputed mastery of the royal death-chamber.

I have seen neither the box on the ear, nor the sweep of the royal leg,—the first that made history since the Regent of Orleans kicked his quondam preceptor, afterward Cardinal Dubois, “once each for the rogue, the pimp, the priest, the minister, and the archbishop,”—but the fact is thoroughly authenticated; Dr. Bergmann related it within my hearing, but was immediately dissuaded from ever repeating the story, “as it might hurt his standing in the army,” or even cause such scandal as to force him to resign his commission.

From my own observation at the Marble Palace, I know that the emphatic way in which his mother argued out of practical existence the state doctrine quoted upset all Prince William’s plans. Himself and wife were head over heels in debt, and had hoped to arrange their affairs satisfactorily by stepping into Frederick’s shoes without inconvenient delay. The energetic Britisher—thus the English Princess Royal was dubbed at the Prussian Court as soon as she began to show her mettle—spoiled it all, and politicians and creditors alike were bound to feel the consequences.

Prominent among the creditors was, at that time, the Countess Waldersee, daughter of the New York banker Lee and widow of Prince Frederick of Schleswig, one of Princess William’s many uncles who had the good taste of departing this life before he succeeded in squandering any considerable portion of the Lee millions. Her Ladyship, extremely wealthy, devout, influential, and, above all, clever with that cleverness styled, in Europe, distinctively American, had undertaken to steer her niece by marriage through the social Scylla and Charybdis besetting her career when she first came to Berlin, and William was delighted. The wife of General Waldersee was just the woman needed to coach

Auguste Victoria in a quiet and dignified way, without exciting suspicion, and, besides,—whether that was an afterthought or one of the main considerations, I would not like to decide,—the Countess always had such large amounts of ready cash at her command. As the then Grand-master, Herr von Liebenau, quaintly put it: “Her Excellency can draw a check for twenty or twenty-five thousand marks as easily as that amount can be spent in our *ménage*.” And Liebenau’s judgment in this matter must certainly be accepted as final, seeing that the disagreeable task of making both ends meet in the princely household fell to his lot during all the meagre years. That business was not a sinecure, I warrant you, though presenting to a German courtier few, if any, novel features, for, like their cousins of England, heirs to the Prussian Crown have always been large borrowers. As Prince Royal, Frederick the Great “worked” all the monarchs in Christendom for loans, from Kaiser Charles VI to the Grand Turk and Louis XV, and his successor, afterward Frederick William II, owed ten millions of Thalers to the “Jews” of Berlin, Paris, and Vienna when the Sage of Sans Souci closed his eyes.

The present Emperor was an exception to the rule in so far as he selected his creditors among personal friends only. His name, I am reliably informed by one having had the very best opportunity for acquiring the correct facts, figured on the debit side of the Waldersee ledger with seven noughts at about the time the old Emperor was dying and his nearest of kin unable to live. And Princess William, likewise, had her private account with the Lee-Waldersees. Only twenty thousand dollars, it is true, but that meant twice her annual income. So the princely couple in the Marble Palace had the very best reasons for straining every point toward a speedy realization of their ambition. Debts of honor harassed each without the other’s knowledge, while neither

recognized obligations of loyalty toward the suffering father. William was scarcely twenty-nine years old, Auguste Victoria had hardly finished her thirtieth year, when the reign of ninety-nine days of agony came to an end, but, unlike the sixteenth Louis and Marie Antoinette, "the two did not fall on their knees together, and, with streaming tears, exclaim: 'O God, guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign.'"

## CHAPTER II

The Empress is not a pretty woman ; not even among daughters of Germany is she entitled to that distinction. The once awkward girl has developed into a large *Frau*, strong-limbed, square-footed, and broad-shouldered, as we meet them by the hundred in the capital, or in any town in the Fatherland, for that matter. She has small grayish-blue eyes, with light, scanty lashes and brows,—sincerest flattery could not call them beautiful, or even pleasing, especially as, for some reason or other, they appear slightly swollen three days out of four. Her arms are beautifully modelled, and white as alabaster, the hands well taken care of, but too large, and given to puffiness, a condition which constant massage forestalls to some extent, but not wholly.

If not under the surveillance of the multitude, Her Majesty walks like a knock-kneed person ; at all times she prefers to lean on somebody's arm, or on a piece of furniture, which tendency gives one an idea that her nether limbs are weak despite their superb outward development.

Up to some two years ago, when the Empress first began to show her age (she is only thirty-nine now, but looks forty-five), Auguste Victoria possessed real claims to beauty in her graceful shoulders and a finely-chiselled bosom.

When I first came to know the Kaiserin in the intimacy of her chamber, the whiteness of her skin had a fairly supernatural aspect, and as she stood, as was her wont to

do when disrobed, against the blue silken curtains, forming a canopy over her bed, with hair loosened and the official property smile for once abandoned, she might have been taken for the prototype of Elsa in all but face. For Elsa, I reckon, possessed large feet, like most of her German impersonators on the operatic stage. That fine figure, then so universally admired, was indeed very far from being a product of stays and powder, as some ladies of the aristocracy gave out, but a luminous reality to which the Kaiser was strongly attracted. During the first four or five years of her imperial life, Auguste Victoria might have adopted Queen Louise's corsetless costume without fear of offending the most artistic eye, and that after nursing six children!

Alas! that vanity should have induced the Kaiserin to spoil her figure, and complexion as well, by submitting to various kinds of flesh-reducing treatment, and by using all known sorts of cosmetics.

I dare say some chance observers will endeavor to correct my estimate of Her Majesty's feet, but in doing so these critics really compliment the royal shoemakers' perfect art; there are two of these functionaries, both natives of Vienna. As to the shoemakers of the Fatherland, Her Majesty would no sooner think of employing any of them than she would eat peas with her knife. While a man's number seven, American measure, might give the Empress supremest comfort, her special artists build for the imperial lady foot-gear intended to defy normal conclusions as to dimensions. The location of the heels, and the heels themselves, are marvels of misleading, and the material and ornamentation help to make the boots or shoes a composite at once graceful and slender.

Her Majesty pays from a hundred to a hundred and fifty florins for these works of art, which are the only items of

toilet she hates to cast off, and, indeed, wears until brushes and creams of all sorts fail to bring back waning lustre.

They are beautiful to look at (the very envious must admit that), but, oh, the pains they give their vain owner! The Empress's broad face, though at times slightly disfigured by freckles, would not be displeasing except for the very red nose, conspicuous whenever she appears in public. And that red nose is only one of the ugly results of feet screwed out of all original resemblance. I am convinced of it, because I never saw Her Majesty with a red nose at home, even at periods when she was suffering from a cold. That additional blot appears only when least wanted, at the theatre, on the throne, on horseback, though there is really small excuse for wearing the tightest of boots—we call them "Scotch boots" in commemoration of a pleasant custom they had in the land of kilts and bagpipes to promote confessions in criminal proceedings—under the long-flowing robe. Still, in mounting or dismounting, the royal feet might show, and Her Majesty desires to be on the safe side with respect to physical charms and shortcomings.

To sum up: Her Majesty is a tall woman of imposing carriage, with a face that is weak rather than intellectual. Having learned how to smile upon the populace and to affect a certain dignified air in public, she is always sure of a "good reception," as the newspapers say, for her condescension, though studied and ever mindful of the desired end, has in it a ring of true courtesy, no matter what people, who, like myself, are behind the scenes, may think of it.

That Napoleon I would have been a great actor if Fate had not destined him for the mighty conqueror he was, a learned Englishman, borrowing the main idea from the Duke of Wellington, undertook to prove in a recent book,



a copy of which I found, several mornings in succession, upon the side-table near the Empress's bed while His Majesty was absent on one of his usual junketings. Can it be that the royal lady means to still more perfect herself in the noble art of pretending qualities and habits foreign to her nature or disposition? Considering Auguste Victoria's past successes in the matter of dissimulation, the undertaking seems quite unnecessary. Let me cite only one of many instances of this sort:

As the eighth Henry's daughter posed as the virgin Queen, so does the German Empress pose as the ideal *Hausfrau*; but while the first succeeded only in deluding the unthinking, the present august lady has tricked the entire civilized world into crediting her with fanciful domestic virtues. I am told that one cannot open a magazine or a newspaper, printed either in Europe, America, Asia, or Africa, not to forget Australia, without encountering some such article as "The Kaiserin as a Mother," "The German Empress Investigating her Kitchen," "Auguste Victoria Superintending her Linen Chest." Books of travel, the A, B, C for the young, and religious tracts alike teem with allusions to Her Majesty's facilities in the line of sewing, child-bearing, darning, and plain cooking.

As a matter of fact, the Empress has visited the lower regions of her residential castles where the very bad indigestibles that grace the imperial table are prepared, but once in her life, in the fall of 1890, and on that same occasion she deigned to look into the department where the linen is kept, but never more.

It was a great and wonderful event, however, while it lasted, and the Royal Housekeeper, Baroness von Larisch, and her host of white-capped and ditto-aproned girls and women probably passed an hour of supreme anxiety lest the great lady should know enough to find fault with things

as they were. In this unpleasant anticipation they were luckily disappointed, however, and aside from the "cheap copy" it made for the press, generally despised but often appealed to by royalty, the visit resulted merely in a single recommendation: It was ordered and decreed by Her Imperial and Royal Majesty that thereafter the all-highest table-linen be marked in a different-colored thread from the most gracious bedclothes. From time immemorial, table-coverings and sheets alike have been adorned with a red crown at the Prussian Court. The all-highest warrant changed that state of things, and red for the imperial couch, yellow or white for the royal board, became obligatory. The idea was a good one, denoting at once delicacy of perception and a certain sense of the elegancies of life; but as the chance appearance of a single butterfly does not necessarily bring summer in its wake, so is the Empress's sole descent to the kitchen floor hardly an evidence of her mastery of domestic concerns.

The only thing about the house which really interests Her Majesty is the daily menu, and that its composition be agreeable to her as well as to the Emperor. To that end the "*Speisensolge*" proposed is placed on her dressing-table nightly, so she may strike out or add anything she likes.

But while not a *Hausfrau* in the accepted sense of the word, Auguste Victoria unfortunately inherited from her mother certain disagreeable traits that in a more or less pronounced degree are found in the majority of German women, qualities dignified as positive virtues by many, and which poets and like irresponsible persons not unfrequently laud to the skies. Her Majesty is peevish, unjust, and petty in the treatment of her retinue, the very best reason why the royal household in the Neues Palais or Schloss is as little free from vexations and even domestic brawls as

other institutions of the kind, be they extensive or small, in Berlin, Potsdam, or anywhere in the Fatherland for that matter.

Sprung from non-puissant stock and reared in comparative poverty, Auguste Victoria seems to abhor the very conditions that gave her discomfort in younger days. In Her Majesty's eyes an untitled servant is of no more consequence than a beggar, and that poverty and uncleanness are necessarily synonymous terms is one of her fixed ideas. As her discrowned and unhappy sister Carlotta, sometime Empress of Mexico, entered upon her exalted duties as sovereign lady in a semi-barbarous country with but one thought, viz. : that of enforcing a crazy set of etiquette rules, so is the German Empress swayed by one domineering notion : she imagines that to assure her own aggrandizement it is but necessary to humble her inferiors.

Foreigners visiting the Fatherland have often told me how surprised and shocked they were upon encountering in the *ménage* of well-to-do and outwardly refined people most disgusting wrangles, charges, and counter-charges between masters and servants. "All valets are thieves, and all barons swindlers," is a saying *en vogue* in the *salons* and *Bierstuben* alike, and it may be added : every German *Hausfrau* is a Tartar in her own particular sphere.

In the majority of Berlin households those *obligato* squabbles begin in the bright and early morning, and the Empress would not be German unless she followed that fashion and kept up a continuous performance till night. Every nation, you must know, boasts but one sort of clay for high and humble, and loftiness of station does not count much when a glove-buttoner is missing or a glass of seltzer has been allowed to flatten.

It is on such occasions that the Princess of Meiningen's sweeping criticism of her sister-in-law, viz. : that "Dona"

(that is Her Majesty's pet name in the family) "is the most arrogant and pretentious Princess on any throne in Christendom," is borne out in its most disagreeable aspects. A peep into the Empress's apartments on almost any morning of the year will explain.

Usually the day's scolding and annoyance is ushered in by the finding of certain memoranda on slips of paper, or visiting cards, which the chamber-women discover when making up the Empress's bed. There are strict orders that these notes must be placed on Her Majesty's toilet-table without delay, for they are in the all-highest handwriting and pencilled to assist the royal memory. I shudder when I think what a mercenary in the Court-marshal's office could do with some of these brief *feuilletons*,—records of imperial weakness and malice. How the autograph fiends would fight and bid for them at Christy's!

"Fifty guineas for Her Majesty's complaint as to '*His Majesty's ill-temper on the eve of Bismarck's dismissal.*'"

"One hundred guineas for 'the Kaiser's remarks on the Duchess of Aosta in his sleep,' taken down verbatim by his august spouse, who sat up in bed horrified." For such and similar affairs those tell-tale "mems" register in springy, excited monosyllables and unsteady letters—once in a while. And then, of course, they were written down to aid Her Majesty in making "copy" for her diary; not at all were they intended for the Court-marshal's eyes, but they come to him just the same, in waste-baskets, crumpled and torn, or riding upon the sharp tongues of his numerous spies and flatterers. The notes indited for that functionary's benefit usually specify some misconduct on a servant's part in this style:

"Spoon tasted of silver powder,"

or,

"Nolte appeared to have been drinking last night."

Nolte is one of Her Majesty's *Kammerdiener* (*valet de chambre*), and a man more sober and industrious one cannot find among a thousand of his class. Still, he may unwittingly have given offence to the all-exacting royal lady, and, thinking it over in bed, while perhaps waiting for her husband to come home, she put down the first accusation that occurred to her. After she herself got through scolding poor Nolte, he was to be bullied, in addition, by his superior officer, Baron von Lyncker. The latter gentleman, who is general overseer of the servants' hall, wastes at least an hour of his valuable time daily listening to explanations of these memoranda on the part of Her Majesty, and the investigations following, fruitless most of them, last even longer.

That the Empress has recourse to written indictments of the sort would indicate either that her memory is very bad, or that the transgressions complained of are extremely slight, or both, but to get at the actual causes underlying this strange freak it is necessary to carry our researches a little further. In doing so we shall find that the Kaiser is a veritable fiend for inditing notes of all sorts after retiring; the Empress merely imitates this habit, which she probably mistakes for an attribute of greatness.

The "mems" disposed of, other vexations are rife. Like many of her sex, "Dona" would rather read forbidden books than the sort that languishes on every drawing-room table, but, of course, the Kaiser must know nothing of that. Imagine the job of keeping anything from William, whose bump of meddlesomeness is so abnormally developed! Surely, no one will blame the Empress for innocently deceiving a husband who would as lief go through her pockets as send a bill to the Reichstag without notifying his Chancellor. She fools him constantly,—has to do it, in order not to die of *ennui*,—and does it quite cleverly,

too, by finding new hiding-places for her Marcel Prévosts and Heinrich Lees all the time, but, unfortunately, Her Majesty is apt to forget overnight the exact locations of her literary treasures. That being the case, and it happens quite frequently, her chambermaids and attendants at the toilet come in for a dreaded half-hour of scolding and insinuation, the Kaiserin assuming, as a matter of course, that one of the women or girls took the book to read, or for a worse purpose even: they might want to turn it over to her husband's Court-marshal!

The poor females are dragged from their breakfast or their work to give detailed accounts of what they have been doing for the last twenty-four hours, where they keep their valuables, etc. Likewise, they are required to furnish their august mistress with views on literature held by themselves and by people nearest to them, the inquisition usually winding up with a peremptory demand that they must find the lost article within a certain time or suffer dismissal.

The same process is gone through when any other thing is lost or mislaid, be it valuable, be it not. Mistrust, indeed, appears to be the Empress's predominant failing, and an inclination to contribute to the happiness of those serving her never seems to enter her mind except on certain set occasions like Christmas and birthdays.

Like her forbidden books, the Empress's private letters are a constant source of annoyance to her retinue. Having a habit of leaving the most intimate missives lying around on toilet-tables and in bandboxes, the Kaiserin never hesitates to accuse the persons on duty in the rooms of reading them, and of spying upon her, when at last she recollects the incident; but as such scenes are matters of daily occurrence, the host of officials and waiting-women deem them hardly worth talking about. Direct abuse offered to

Nolte, or his comrades, *Herr Lück* and *Herr Hoepfner*, is, however, always sure of causing more or less gossip, for these men represent the very cream of stewardship and are generally looked upon as models of their kind. All three are fine-looking fellows, and their tasteful dress of black and silver appears never more than a day old. That they understand their polite duties to a nicety goes without saying.

Why, then, does our august mistress quarrel with these worthies? Ten reasons for one! To-day the *Kammerdiener* may announce breakfast, perhaps, by the Kaiser's special order, a minute or two before the imperial lady is quite ready; and, again, he may be compelled to submit that the restive *carrossiers* before Her Majesty's carriage cannot be persuaded to stand still much longer.

Disagreeable as these reminders are for the time being, even a lady who in official language figures as the all-mightiest ought to receive them with becoming composure. Not so Auguste Victoria. She forgets that *Herr Nolte* or *Herr Lück* is merely performing his duty; confounding cause and effect, she treats the unhappy attendant as the wilful disturber of her plans, and abuses him roundly, even in the presence of her maids or occasional visitors. It is a cowardly thing to do, and I have seen these men tremble under this unjust treatment and bow half a foot lower than etiquette prescribes, to hide their pale lips.

In other royal households there are favorites and black sheep among the denizens of the servants' hall; not so in the Neues Palais. *Kammerdiener* and *Kammerlackei*, *maitresse de Maison*, chambermaid and scrub-woman alike, suffer at the hands of a haughty and inconsiderate mistress, and officials or domestics able to report at the evening reunions that they escaped chiding during the past twelve hours are congratulated by the rest upon their singular good fortune.

Six *Kammerlackeien* (chamber flunkies) are engaged in waiting upon the august lady every day in the year; on special occasions their number is doubled and trebled; but what a time they have! Although selected for their special fitness to perform the work demanded of them, none seems able to give satisfaction. "Jarbot presented the tea awkwardly," "Dombrowsky failed to bring a correct answer from X. Y.," "The gloves of Schiller were unclean," "Gehrke's shoes make a dreadful noise when he walks," read some of the memoranda in the Kaiserin's handwriting that were fished from *Herr* von Lyncker's waste-basket within a week's time.

And if men-servants fare no better, the female part of the retinue is certainly not bedded on roses. It is an open secret that *Frau* von Larisch, who formerly superintended the royal household, came from Her Majesty's rooms more often crying than in a joyful mood, and the wardrobe-women, *Frau* Schwerdtfeger and *Fräulein* Gleim, the busiest mortals in the Empire, by the way, rarely pass a day without getting into a row, for whatever goes wrong in their department, they are held responsible; whether they misinterpret Her Majesty's intentions with respect to a new mode of hair-dressing, or whether the Vienna tailor failed to fit a gown or to finish it in time, it is all the same: Schwerdtfeger and Gleim are hauled over the coals while they are hot.

Alas, and alack, for the chimeras of this world! Common folks have troubles of their own, and, piqued by a thousand and one vexations and discomforts, torment others into a like unhappy state; it is a detestable yet not unpardonable habit; but what about the rich and mighty causing gloom and dejection for the mere pleasure of the thing?

Her Majesty is a very religious woman, and it is but natural that she commands her people to attend divine service



on Sundays. With this wish the great majority would gladly conform, but for the fact that they have absolutely no time for their devotions. The men and women must be at their Majesties' beck and call until the very second they drive out; that is, up to 9.45 A.M. Now, as service commences at ten o'clock, as no vehicles are obtainable, and the nearest church is an hour's distance, all attempts to hear a sermon at a common place of worship are out of the question. So Her Majesty decided to arrange for a special service to be held at the Palace, and we ladies of the Court received the agreeable commission to report truants. It is a disgusting duty, but we have to follow orders, and most unpleasant contentions arise when our Grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, takes a hand in the game by rising at an early hour and watching things from her window, unknown to anybody. In that case not only the absentees get into trouble, but also we, who fail to blab on them. Upon Her Excellency's denunciation, myself and a poor chambermaid were up for a scolding once, and while I was inventing excuses for Pauline the best way I could, the girl burst out: "May it please Your Majesty to remember that this going to church costs us an hour of sleep."

"And when do you have to rise in order to get through with your work and attend service?" demanded the Empress, raising her voice.

"At five o'clock, Your Majesty."

"That is not so bad."

"No," said the girl, "not for those who idle from one year's end to the other."

This pert answer might have resulted in Pauline's dismissal, had she not immediately sacrificed a round five-mark piece for Auguste Victoria's church-building fund. Countess Brockdorff had already obtained leave to bounce

her, but that act of generosity saved her head. The Kaiserin cannot be angry long with a person who contributes a brick to some new church, but members of the household who refuse to be bled have an unhappy time of it. The plate goes round three, four, or five times per annum, and the amounts bestowed are carefully recorded to speak for or against the different parties, as the case might be. And that happens in a house where the servants are not only badly paid, but must needs forego the greater part of the presents domestics in ordinary establishments receive on stated occasions.

The newspapers annually indulge in a great ado about the grand Christmas celebrations in the Neues Palais and the Schloss; they tell "how their Majesties try to find out the wishes of their meanest employee to gratify them in truly royal style." Fiddlesticks! If a chambermaid receives two handkerchiefs or a cotton petticoat, and a courier a pair of three-mark gloves, he and she consider themselves mighty well taken care of by their Majesties. Time and again I have seen my mistress's antechamber filled with articles that half a dozen stores sent on approval, and from which she desired to select something for a retiring servant who was about to embark on the sea of matrimony. In the end a lamp or a china coffee service was chosen, but never a thing exceeding twenty marks in price. And it took Auguste Victoria three or four days to come to that decision!

Unfortunately, the august lady is much less tardy when determining upon discontinuing her people's services. Sometimes, for no reason whatever, she takes a sudden dislike to persons and then she will not rest until they are discharged. So it happened that the nurse of little Prince Augustus, a girl of twenty-five, Emma Rüter by name, received orders to quit in January, 1891.

The young woman, daughter of a preacher in Westphalia, had been attached to the nursery for eight years; she loved the children and was beloved by them. Both Majesties had expressed satisfaction with her work on divers occasions, and Emma fondly imagined that she was fixed for life, especially when on Christmas-day the Empress had given her Prince Augustus's picture, bearing the all-highest autograph, together with some pious motto.

When the notice of dismissal came, Emma went at once to Countess Brockdorff to ask for an explanation, but Her Excellency refused to enter into details. "I am acting under Her Majesty's instructions." That was all she would say.

Five minutes later the girl came running into the nursery, with dishevelled hair and staring eyes. She threw herself on the floor, and her moans attracted half the household. The doctors said wounded pride and disappointment had caused her to be temporarily deranged. She was sent to an asylum. A week later poor Emma was a raving maniac. She died in a strait-jacket at the end of the year.

I asked Countess Brockdorff, Count Eulenburg, and Baron Lyncker why this girl had been discharged. All three had but praises for her, all three regretted the sad end of so worthy a person, none of the three knew what prompted Her Majesty's displeasure. She probably did not know herself.

The Kaiser knew what he was doing when he allowed Poultney Bigelow to spread his (the Kaiser's) reports about life in the Neues Palais over the pages of newspapers and magazines. These stories of imperial unpretendingness and democracy make good reading, particularly so because of Bigelow's affectation of having seen and heard

with his own eyes and ears the things he talks about, while as a matter of fact the gifted American is no more intimately acquainted with the ins and outs of the royal *ménage* than the last of penny-a-liners. I have made Mr. Bigelow welcome at the Neues Palais repeatedly, and once or twice heard His Majesty speak of him as a "person having the *entrée* to a lot of respectable white paper,"—a Bismarckian phrase with an adjective thrown in ; but as to this literary man's claims of extraordinary ascendancy over other biographers, that is all nonsense. As a visitor at Court he enjoyed even less freedom than most others who come armed with the endorsement of family ties and titles, for while their Majesties may unbend occasionally, very occasionally, before a relative,—and they are kin to all the great houses in the world excepting the Grand Turk,—they could never afford to ask a mere "gentleman" to pot-luck. On the contrary, they will always maintain the lustre of divine inaccessibility under the cloak of affableness and extreme civility when associating with a friend not their equal. Mind, I do not blame Mr. Bigelow for the many untruths he published respecting the Berlin Court ; if his statements are not correct, they are at least agreeable, and that he is at best a most superficial observer has probably never struck "the man in black." This latter designation I borrow from the servants' hall *patois* ; in a house where every male wears either livery or uniform, a person in civilian clothes is bound to acquire a nickname descriptive of this peculiarity.

But to return to poor Schwerdtfeger and Gleim. Of all domestics in Her Majesty's service, these women are worked the hardest. They have practically not a minute to themselves, as the description of the Kaiserin's daily habits in a later chapter will show, and even their night's rest is often interfered with by the employer's uncertain

and whimsical ways. I remember, to cite only one instance, that, during a certain night in the beginning of June, 1893, the entire household of the Neues Palais was alarmed by the announcement that a few hours hence, at 7.45 A.M., Her Royal Highness, the Crown Princess of Sweden, would arrive at Wildpark station.

The Kaiserin had no sooner heard the news than I was commanded to have Schwerdtfeger and Gleim called, in order to finish a reception-dress originally billed to make its first appearance on the following Sunday. The women accordingly got out of bed, and, with the aid of several hastily-summoned seamstresses, completed the job by 5.30 A.M., being not a little proud of their achievement. But if they expected a word of praise, or even a gracious smile for their trouble, they were soon disenchanted. The Kaiserin had changed her mind on the question of toilets, and the new dress being pushed aside, half a dozen others were tried on in succession, meeting the same fate, until, at last, a message from the Court-marshal reminded Her Majesty that time waits upon no one. A quick decision was now made, and the Empress sat down to have her hair dressed. That procedure took up another ten minutes of precious time, and was only just concluded when the Kaiser's valet knocked at the door to say that his master was waiting.

"Tell His Majesty that, owing to the confounded tardiness of *Frau* Schwerdtfeger and *Fräulein* Gleim, my toilet is somewhat delayed," cried the Empress, in response.

Of course, the driven and slandered women had to pocket the insult, and the Kaiser was regaled with a repetition of the oft-heard story of their unsuitableness and inadequacy, during the drive to the station. It was not exactly news to him; he has to stomach that sort of recital every time his wife is late, but that morning's

dose was probably liberal out of all proportions, for, as he jumped from the carriage, I heard him say: "*Verfluchtes Volk; warum machst Du nicht einen Kladderadatsch?*" In English: "Why don't you kick the whole damned gang out?"

"By God, I will, the very next time you are made to wait on their account," replied the Empress, as she proceeded to thank the assembled public and officials for their hurrahs and bows, with the sweetest smile imaginable, and then stepped over to where I was standing with several other *Hofdamen*. As each of us made haste to assure Her Majesty that she looked not only well, but positively beautiful, her good humor continued, and everybody seemed happy despite the severe words that had been spoken,—severe words and hard language for an imperial couple, though not the hardest by far one hears at the Berlin Court, as both Majesties are wont to interpolate their speech to the servants with frequent "By Gods," "*Verfluchts*," and "*Verdammts*."

Referring to this habit, an English woman visiting us once cited Lord Lauderdale's clever *mot* of "mud in silk stockings," but I cannot agree with Her Ladyship in this out-and-out denunciation, for blasphemy and "cuss" words of the lighter calibre are part and parcel of a German's every-day speech, and only foreigners take serious offence at the habit to which men and women alike are slaves.

Contrary to German notions, the Empress shares the conjugal couch with her husband. They sleep in a large brass bedstead, very modern and entirely unlike the sort of furniture romantic persons associate with royalty's boudoirs. The Neues Palais, the Berlin Schloss, Wilhelmshöhe, and other castles where the imperial couple reside alternately, or occasionally only, have all been equipped with commodities of the same English pattern since the present

Kaiser's enthronization. "To the museums with my grandfather's field-bed and Queen Louise's three-foot mahogany couch. I want a resting-place where I may stretch myself without fear of falling out," was one of the first of Emperor William's commands recorded in the House-marshal's journal of June, 1888. And all who have seen the ancient chattels, venerable but hard, beautifully modelled but dangerously narrow, will forgive the reputed spendthrift for his act of seeming extravagance which the public credited to the Kaiser's at one time strong Anglo-manian views.

In the Berlin and Potsdam residences their Majesties' joint bed-chamber has two entrances,—one opening upon the Emperor's suite of apartments, the other upon Auguste Victoria's living rooms. The hour of rising being settled before retiring, the wardrobe man and woman, respectively, at the time given, knock on the door nearest which their august employer sleeps, and if no response is received, call out to him or her. More often than not the servants are required to go through this performance three and four, and even six times; but whether that be actually necessary, or merely a concession to Prussian tradition, I cannot say. Under the present regime, you must know, everything about the palace and the people in it is regulated according to customs and practices introduced by Frederick the Great, and there is a legend that the hero of the Seven Years' War was an early riser by compulsion only. His *Kammerhusar* was obliged to fairly drag him from his couch.

At the stroke of 6.30, 7, or 7.30 o'clock their Majesties emerge from their room. The Kaiser, in pajamas and sporting a jaunty cap, makes at once for his bath, while the Empress, clad only in a woollen wrapper and heelless slippers, ascends to the nursery, where her youngest little ones sleep under care of three or four maids.

If none of the children require special attention at that moment, the Kaiserin soon returns to the lower floor, where the *Bettfrau* (chamber-woman) awaits her with the stereotyped announcement that the bath is ready and has the prescribed temperature of twenty-eight to twenty-nine and a half degrees. The Empress thereupon examines the thermometer swimming in the basin, and if it bears out the statement, dismisses the attendant, for such are Her Majesty's prejudices implanted by her frugal bringing-up on the one hand, and her aversion to coming into personal contact with untitled servants on the other, that she cannot bear the presence of a trusted maid when most women would be only too glad to have one. Neither does Her Majesty require anybody's services during the drying process, and when, after ten or fifteen minutes, assistance is summoned, the women find the Kaiserin attired in a morning-gown and ready to have her hair dressed. That, of course, is quite an easy task so early in the morning, when only the hair that actually grows upon Her Majesty's head requires looking after, there being just sufficient to make a little knot on top.

If the Kaiser and Kaiserin intend to go for a drive immediately after breakfast, as is frequently the case, the older children are ordered down to kiss their mother and read a chapter from some devotional book before her. It is a pretty custom, that lacks not impressiveness, and even the lower domestics, who, working in the corridor, cannot help observing the scene in the dressing-room, are deeply moved by it, but stern reality only too often interferes with its proper conclusion.

"Wheez!" goes the speaking-tube. The *Kammerdiener* of His Majesty announces to the *Kammerdiener* of Her Majesty that his master has been pleased to enter the breakfast-room, or to step down to the Apollo Hall on the first floor, where sometimes the early repast is served.



The effect the message invariably produces would be amusing if the poor maids were not the scapegoats. Empress, Princes, and domestics all fly and flutter about like so many frightened chicks; the children are instantly dismissed, and Her Majesty's sharp reprimands spur the anxious women to hasty effort.

"The Kaiser is waiting!" It sounds to those who know him best almost like news of a serious ailment or misfortune threatening the head of the government.

At any rate, the Empress usually manages to catch up with her august lord within five or six minutes at the very latest, and the Fatherland is once more safe.

Even their worst enemy, the Prince of Reuss-Greiz-Kranichfeld-Gera-Lobenstein, etc., Henry XXII, he of the Elder Branch, cannot charge the Emperor and Empress of Germany with being gourmets. Though the breakfast consists of four or five courses, including meats, eggs, different kinds of breads and cakes, stewed fruits and marmalades, refined taste would find little of it palatable, grease and the frying-pan being too much in evidence.

Unless the Emperor is free to take her for a walk or drive, the Kaiserin devotes herself to her children after breakfast. They promenade in the park together or amuse themselves in-doors with readings or games, and romance-spinning being one of Her Majesty's strong points, the boys and the little daughter never grow weary listening to the old tales of Grimm and Andersen. But soon, only too soon for the youngsters, the various governors of the puny Royal Highnesses send word, in the most submissive language to be sure, but having a ring of the peremptory nevertheless, that it is time to begin with the lessons. Expressions of regret all round, prayers for just one more glimpse into fairy-land, for permission to take a spin on the bike

or look after the ponies,—all chattering at once, kisses, embraces, tears even ; but a word from the Kaiserin's lips settles the whole litter: "I will tell papa." And the striplings that may rule empires and command battles in a dozen years or so, scatter after a hasty good-bye.



### CHAPTER III

Those of my readers who have an intimate knowledge of Court life in general and of the consummate luxuries which, for instance, the great English aristocrats and American millionaires enjoy at their homes, will be loath to believe me when I say that the Emperor and Empress of Germany share the services of numerous attendants to their bodily wants with the general public, indeed with everybody able to pay their not exorbitant fees. It is only within the last year or so that the Emperor learned to shave himself; up to then a Potsdam barber, dignified by the title of *Hofbarbier*, who keeps a common and somewhat dirty shop on the market-place of that town, waited upon His Majesty twice each day to tickle his chin and scrape his cheeks.

That one of the Kaiser's twoscore or thereabouts of body-flunkies might study the gentle art and replace the public tormentor, seems to have never entered any one's head, despite the fact that some fifteen hundred hired persons, among them eight hundred liveried servants, lie awake nights, in and about the royal residence, thinking of ways and means to lighten their august master's and mistress's burdens and to contribute to their happiness.

As a matter of fact, the Hohenzollerns are like the *nouveaux riches*: they do not know the meaning of luxury and personal comfort. The grandfather of the present Kaiser insisted upon screwing down his lamp every time

he left the library to go to dinner or attend the theatre, although he disliked very much the odor that naturally developed. Still, he could stand this annoyance better than the thought of wasting so much precious kerosene at a mark per gallon. The crazy little elevator in the historical palace Unter den Linden, where the first William lived with his Empress, was built only in the year 1880, when the Kaiser was eighty-three and the Kaiserin sixty-nine years of age, and when, moreover, the physicians had positively forbidden their distinguished patients to mount stairs.

While William II has done away with the public barber nuisance of late, he employs a Berlin colleague of that gentleman to "set up" and curl his mustachios into a heavenward direction day by day. This fellow is due at the palace at five, six, or seven o'clock every morning, receiving special orders when to appear the previous evening. It happens quite often, too, that he is wanted at an earlier hour than the schedule trains run; in that case a royal carriage and pair bring him from the capital post-haste.

Now one may imagine this beard-dresser is the possessor of some patent method, or of particularly dexterous fingers; but he is not. His particular "trick" is practised by nearly all the high-class tonsorial artists in the Fatherland, and any half-witted *Kammerdiener* should be able to master it after a day or two; yet ignorance of a valet's real serviceableness forbids a trial, and incidentally causes no end of loss of time, trouble, and expense. But these are minor considerations compared with other eventualities, the principal among them that of tale-bearing.

A person in the lower walks of life making daily visits to an imperial palace, and to its intimate chambers at that, can hardly be expected to keep his observations to himself, and, moreover, to disappoint his ordinary customers,

who, as a matter of course, will ply him with questions innumerable of what he hears and sees; he cannot help spreading that familiarity that breeds contempt.

And if that be true of the Kaiser's outside body-attendants, must it not apply with even greater force to shop-recruited servants that wait upon Her Majesty?

Some time ago I was shocked to hear retailed in Berlin's polite society circles a story about the Kaiserin's well-rounded knees and a habit she has of pressing them against those of the person sitting opposite her. How do you suppose a statement of that character can leak out, except by the channels intimated? The Queens of Prussia, it is true, are not quite so chary of their limbs as those of Spain, who, officially at least, must be legless; but the Empress is certainly an exceedingly modest woman, and nothing in her public conduct can possibly have occasioned such comment, however truthful it may be.

Gossip from the servants' hall, you say? That is entirely out of the question. Our royal domestics are far too fond of their bread-and-butter, hard as it is, to imperil their position and the advancement and pension in store and connected with it. The names of the tale-bearers, I wager, are on record in the Berlin or Potsdam city directories under such headings as "Massage," "Chiropodist," "Accoucheur," etc., for people of that class are constantly going and coming at the Kaiser's Court, and that very circumstance assures them a tremendous clientele of well-to-do busybodies at once eager to worm out and spread outrageous personal tittle-tattle about the all-highest in the land.

I can well imagine *Frau Commerzienrath von Cohn* or *Frau Kommissionsrath Meyer*, their ample charms distributed over a velvet *fauteuil*, and with one naked foot in the lap of *Herr Reichelt*, nail-polisher-in-ordinary to Her

Majesty and the Berlin Four Hundred, prod that unfortunate to disgorge the very latest small talk of royalty *en dtshabillt*.

Can he, with his eye to business, refuse to entertain these ladies, if only by innuendo? It is not so much the fact that the Empress employs him as that there is but one Empress in Germany, while the woods are full of Cohns and Meyers. Her Majesty requires his services two or three times per week, paying him ten marks and fare for each trip; but what is that compared with the many three-mark fees that gossip-hunting bankers' wives and daughters, actresses and kept women, hold in readiness for his asking?

Though the Kaiserin has twenty-four handmaidens, besides her staff of titled ladies, to look after her wants, she is obliged to call on Frau Scheibner, of Friedrich Strasse, Berlin, whom anybody can hire at the rate of three marks an hour, every time she wants to be massaged. I have already mentioned the fact that Her Majesty objects to employ assistance after the bath; her most trusted maids and women, and among them several that have been in the body-service for many years, are never allowed to see the Kaiserin in the altogether, and if any of the female retinue happens to enter a chamber while Her Majesty is disrobing, or only partly dressed, the sovereign lady becomes very angry and turns the frightened attendant out in the quickest order possible, insinuating all sorts of things. Yet the Scheibner woman was engaged for her delicate office on the mere statement of newspaper articles describing her success in ridding a certain well-known singer of superfluous flesh.

And right here I approach an almost limitless chapter,—that of Auguste Victoria's inordinate vanity.

"I wonder if Solomon the Wise ever knew a person half so vain as my granddaughter-in-law," the late Empress

Augusta used to say, adding, with a smile: "Of course he did, else why should the authorship of the Ecclesiastes, with its quaint truism, 'All is vanity,' be imputed to him?"

At about the time when the public prints echoed the praises of Frau Scheibner for having turned a lady, who as Martha looked uncommonly plump, into a lithe and winsome Marguerite, the Emperor became enamored with what is called on the continent the Princess of Wales figure,—a long waist and slender bust. And being always anxious to cotton to her husband's fitful tastes, and, it seems to me, being even apprehensive of endangering her position if at any time she were unable to please William's eye, the Kaiserin would not rest until means for bringing about a radical change in her own appearance had been discovered. The glorious bosoms that until then were her pride had to be reduced, the well-proportioned fulness of her lower torso was to decrease! When the Empress told Countess Brockdorff and myself of this contemplated vandalism, we begged hard that she reconsider her decision, and after much pleading Her Majesty agreed to it, but the same evening ordered her woman of the bed-chamber, *Frau von Haake*, to help her find a flesh-reducer. What else could this complaisant creature do but smile assent and try to carry out the command? While inborn modesty forbade her, under ordinary circumstances, to read any paper more worldly than her mistress's own organ, the pious *Reichsbote*, the good lady sent to the city for all the wicked sheets that *pfennigs* and *marks* can buy, but, on examining the advertising columns, found nothing suitable except *réclame* for time-honored Banting. And that would never do, for Her Majesty is a large eater and constitutionally opposed to depriving herself of the good things the table affords. In sheer desperation the *Kammerfrau*



turned at last to the news portion, and almost the first item of interest she saw was the story of how *Fräulein* — lost fifty pounds under the kneading fists of a skilful *masseuse*.

I thought I observed a ring of triumph in Adele von Haake's voice as she made the announcement to Her Majesty: The Kaiserin's most intense wish, at that particular time, was near consummation, and she (Haake) would introduce her into the state of new bliss. Could there be anything more pleasing and inspiring to the mind of a courtier? The Brockdorff and Countess Keller both turned green with envy when I explained to them why *Frau* von Haake held her head so high, and I myself own to have felt a little nettled at her success.

On the morning after the gentlewoman's discovery, Madame Scheibner arrived at the palace in a demi-carriage graciously provided for her convenience and sent to Wildpark station to meet her. How we have grown overnight, *Frau* Massage-artist, to be sure! Yesterday the meek servant of merchants' wives, with a play-actress thrown in here and there to provide spice for the nondescript small talk one has to carry on while scattering Madame Mueller's or *Frau* Schultze's *embonpoint*, and to-day the attendant of an imperial and royal majesty of which there are only four in the wide, wide world. The fat porter, who saw *Frau* Scheibner alight at the palace, and saw to it, too, that she used the servants' entrance instead of the great portals for which she was making in the full bloom of her haughty spirits, said afterward: "Never came across a more puffed-up hen in all my life! Why, she actually wore black stockings, the wench, like a real lady." It should be mentioned here, in parenthesis, that the white knitted article continues to form the holiday attire for the nether limbs of German women of the lower and middle classes up to this day, as

one is frequently forced to observe in all parts of the Fatherland.

Well, the *masseuse* came, saw, talked, and conquered; and those who have but occasion to look at her imperial victim, and know nothing of the Empress's personal history during the past two or three years, will certainly give Scheibner credit for being a flesh-reducer *par excellence*, for Auguste Victoria is now slenderness personified, and, lo! her chief point of attractiveness when in Court dress—the round outlines of her pear-shaped breasts—are sadly missed. To quote once more from the biblical chapter the old Empress was fond of referring to: "There is no remembrance of former things," or none to speak of.

But Scheibner must not be blamed for the whole extent of the damage that a hundred and fifty years ago might have sent her to the rack, and in Good Queen Bess's time would certainly have precipitated the lady into a vessel filled with boiling oil, there to remain until she was well done and no bone ached her; the Empress's reckless use of patent medicines and drugs, and her passion for indulging in violent exercise when in an interesting condition, must be held equally responsible with excessive massaging. There is probably not a brand of cosmetics, or similar application intended to beautify and improve the complexion or forestall and arrest adiposity, or any concoction whatever claiming this or that or a hundred things in the line of averting blemishes or amending one's good points, which the Empress has not employed at one time or another, either externally or internally. The cupboards in the bathroom in Potsdam as well as in Berlin are veritable museums of curiously-shaped and highly-labelled bottles and pots and retorts, bearing the names of chemists the world over. Some are half filled, others remain unopened, and all were procured at more or less heavy expense in money and time

wasted, for the Kaiser and Court-marshal must, of course, know nothing of these carryings on, and not unfrequently strangers are pressed into service to procure the latest cosmetical novelties *en vogue* among Parisiennes or the inmates of Turkish harems.

The most beautiful piece of furniture in Her Majesty's dressing-room is the wash-stand,—a great marble slab of perfect black, resting on solid silver legs, the *chefs-d'œuvre* of some London silversmiths. Above is a mirror, with a richly-ornamented, broad silver frame, set in the wall. There are the ordinary number of toilet utensils, hand-painted and of original design, but, though large-sized, they take up hardly one-third of the room on the big table, which groans under the weight of innumerable bottles and platters, filled with toilet-waters, medicines, and a thousand and one things,—jugs of milk and a plateful of cucumbers, bran-water at the side of *Ambrée crème*, fat-powders and others, vaseline, *eaux* of a hundred denominations, vinegars of all brands, rose-waters, "electricity drops," opium, and what not.

Once the Emperor strayed into the room, and, seeing and smelling this exhibition, remarked: "I did not know the *Schloss Apotheke* had moved up here. And what is that?" he added, pointing to the cucumber plate; "are you making yourself a salad between times? I see you have plenty of vinegars and oils around."

When His Majesty had gone, the Empress turned to Frau Gleim: "I am glad the Kaiser did not discover our little bottle. Give me a few drops on a piece of sugar; I feel quite faint after the ordeal. If he had seen the arsenic phial, there would have been such a row!"

Arsenic my mistress takes to insure a fresh and buoyant appearance; magnesia is supposed to whiten her nose and face when flushed by excessive lacing and tight shoes; but while these drugs, in conjunction with all the other messes,

had a share in undermining Her Majesty's robust condition and in destroying the clearness of her complexion, the injudicious internal use of iodine is probably responsible for the sovereign lady's premature wrinkles, her reduced bosoms, and her gray hair.

Auguste Victoria commenced the practice in 1894, taking at first one-sixteenth, afterward one-fourth of a grain of iodine daily, by whose advice I do not know. Her body-physician or any of the Court physicians had certainly nothing to do with it. This irritant poison worked with slow energy, but its flesh-devouring propensities were far from alarming Auguste Victoria, who welcomed the symptom as one bringing her nearer the husband's *beau idéal* of womanly perfection. "She would eat belladonna," I once heard Countess Keller, the lady-in-waiting, say, "if, by doing so, she could secure the Kaiser's company but for a single additional night in the year."

In a previous paragraph I mentioned Her Majesty's passion for indulging in violent exercise while in an interesting condition. The reader may say, in return: "How can she help it when she is always having children?" But a reference to statistics corrects this queer notion, which is only too popular in the Kaiserin's own estimation, for she positively detests to be thought *enceinte*; and if she must own to it in her own household, all servants are solemnly warned not to mention the fact on pain of instant dismissal. But to return to those infant statistics: Married at twenty-three, on the last of February, 1881, her first son, Friedrich Wilhelm, was born May 6, 1882; Eitel Fritz saw the light in July, 1883, and Adalbert arrived in July, 1884; on January 29, 1887, Prince Augustus was born, and on July 27, 1888, Prince Oscar,—five in seven years,—a good showing, but not an extraordinary one. Assuredly, there have been more pronounced cases of

*mater*-mania, especially in Germany; why, then,—the Kaiserin asks this question of her ladies many times in the course of a year,—why, then, make so much fuss about it? Why these ever-recurring newspaper allusions to her fecundity? But there is no rest for royal personages who overdo things in one respect or another, and so it happened that, in the beginning of June, 1890, a London daily, having good official connections, published an article intimating the probability of a further addition to “the Kaiser’s tribe of babies before the year was up.” Of course, the information was telegraphed to Berlin while still hot, and the pious *Reichsbote* took occasion to comment on it, choosing for a text Genesis vi, 1: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them ——”

The *Reichsbote*,—this in the very sheet that the Kaiserin has stamped with highest approval, the only one she subscribes for! An official denial was out of the question; what, then, could be done to hoodwink the public and arrest further remarks upon the distasteful subject? A council of war, consisting of the indispensable Haake, Countesses Keller and Brockdorff, *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, and myself, was at once assembled to sit on the case, and, after profound deliberation, it was agreed that, first, Her Majesty must engage in some enterprise sufficiently daring to refute the published account; secondly, that the official gazette must be ordered to comment on her doings, and, thirdly, that this latter circumstance in itself involved a conclusive denial of the original report.

Our verdict, even though it might have been construed into something akin to high treason by a little stretch of the imagination, suited the Empress admirably. Here was her opportunity for silencing organized loyal impertinence and for becoming a sort of heroine at the same time.

*Herr Lück* was despatched to *Oberhofmeister* von Mirbach with the request to furnish Her Majesty with a copy of the Kaiser's daily calendar for June, and, on examining it, Auguste Victoria was not long finding the looked-for chance: toward the end of the month the war-lord had engaged to go to Pasewalk, to inspect the Cuirassier regiment garrisoned there, "*her* Cuirassiers," as, some months before, the Kaiser had made his wife "proprietary" of the Pasewalkers. Ah, she would ask leave to parade her regiment before him on the occasion of his visit to the old town! "Willie"—this is the Empress's pet name for her lord and master—would not be "Willie" if he objected to a spectacle of that kind! The uniform that goes with every imperial decree naming honorary officers was pulled from the camphor-box in a jiffy, and was found to be a perfect fit, except that the waist might be tighter, considering that Her Majesty had received from Paris a new set of corsets, styled "death-grip" by the wardrobe-women. So it was taken in at the seams, an inch in some places and half an inch in others. And the child she was carrying under her heart? What mattered that! Did not "Willie," when she first appeared before him in troopers' garb and fully panoplied, exclaim, admiringly: "I see no milliner does fit my wife with gloves," adding, with a sarcastic smile, apparent to me, but not to Her Majesty, it seemed: "It's Shakespeare paraphrased, you know."

Well, "Dona" had her triumph. Seated on the strong-limbed parade-horse, wofully cramped for breath, and her face purple, she rode for an hour or longer at the head of the heavy troopers in their glittering helmets and breast-plates, going through all the evolutions—march, canter, *pesade*, and gallop—as her true steed, ever alert to the bugle-call, willed it. After the exercise, there was a big banquet in honor of the imperial guests, and the Empress

sat in the centre of the tables, placed horseshoe fashion, eating and drinking with accustomed appetite, "death-grip" holding her torso in its vise more than half the day!

On December 17 of the same year her child (Prince Joachim) was born, one of the puniest bits of humanity that ever outlived the period of teething. Like George the Second's oldest Prince—the same who subsequently turned crazy for several considerable periods of his long reign—the boy "was scarce made up, his mother not having gone her full time." The Empress had been taken in labor prematurely on receipt of news that the Kaiser's sister, Crown Princess Sophie of Greece, was about to embrace her husband's faith,—an event that did not actually take place until May 2 in the following year. For the time being nothing definite was settled concerning the Duchess's change of religious sentiment; but the mere project of apostasy in connection with a Prussian Princess sufficed to throw the Empress, who is Lutheran to the verge of fanaticism, into a violent passion, and in the midst of her excitement the child was born, a frail little thing, entirely unlike the rest of the imperial progeny.

When the Kaiser saw the poor wee baby, the chagrin of that proud man was awful to contemplate, and the gentlemen of his suite were at a loss to know whether it would be safe to compliment him upon the increase in his family or omit the formality on this inauspicious occasion. For myself I dispensed with it after seeing the look William gave one of the Court physicians, who had stuttered forth fustian congratulations. His Majesty remained only long enough in the chamber of the *accouchée* to frighten us all; on withdrawing, he ordered the doctors to his study, where, in peremptory language, he demanded them to account for the diminutiveness of the latest Hohenzollern.

The consensus of medical opinion blamed the circumstance of the birth already alluded to, but Dr. Leuthold, chief surgeon of the army, had enough bluntness in him to go to one of the book-cases and draw from it a volume of the "*Konversations Lexikon*," containing a dissertation on the injurious effect of tight-lacing during the period of pregnancy.

"The bad news from Athens," he said, "has only precipitated things; those infernal corsets Her Majesty used to wear are principally responsible for the condition of her child."

That settled the French "death-grip" manufacturer for a time, but it also kept Dr. Leuthold out of the enjoyment of the coveted appellation "von" for seven years longer. He was ennobled only in the beginning of 1897, while in the ordinary course of office-holding in His Majesty's immediate *entourage* the distinction should have been conferred upon him much earlier. Let me recall, in this connection, the case of the Stolbergs. The family of the late Grand Chamberlain, Count Otto von Stolberg-Wernigerode, had been awaiting recognition of the title of Prince, conferred upon it by decree of the "Holy Roman Emperor" that was, fully one hundred and forty-six years when William II succeeded to the crown, but within sixteen months afterward, the elevation or re-elevation of these feudal lords to the princely dignity was gazetted.

I shall never forget our trials and tribulations the first nine months after Joachim's birth, if I live a hundred years, nor will the other officials of the palace and the servants, high and low, who attended either of their Majesties during that period. Frederick II called his father's Court "a hell and dungeon," and William II seemed eager to make his as nearly similar to the old-time



standard as possible. All of us were sweltering in a sea of perturbation with that baby constantly on the brink of dissolution: the mother anxious, fearful of the husband she vainly tried to please; the father dejected, provoked almost beyond endurance, and above all disappointed. He, the parent of a weakling, of a child upon whose brow scrofula had set its damning mark! All those stories of hereditary disease and degeneration would be revived in the public prints. There would probably be references to his dwarfed arm and his running ear. "And to think that 'Dona' brought it upon him and upon herself by the confounded vanity he had pampered and encouraged in every way possible. As for his sister Sophie, he would be revenged on her and on all these beggarly Greeks!"

These are only extracts from William's ravings overheard by his adjutants and other attendants in those days. The threatening references concerning the Duchess of Sparta I witnessed myself time and again.

The Empress, on her part, eager to make up as far as possible for her previous thoughtlessness, nursed little Joachim at her breast for a longer period than she had done in the case of any of his brothers (these were either weaned or given over to the tender care of a wet-nurse after three months); but this very circumstance, much as it did toward improving the little one's general health, was destined to become the cause of a distemper that in all probability will worry him as long as he lives.

The baby Prince was getting on nicely, when the Empress, while nursing him one morning, received a despatch from her sister, Princess Frederick Leopold of Prussia, who was just then *enccinte*, saying that her husband had abandoned her in the course of their Italian tour,—leaving her with a solitary *Hofdame*, a young and inexperienced one at that,—while he was speeding toward parts unknown in

the society of a notorious dancer. Here mention should be made of the fact that Auguste Victoria and her sister were great friends at that time; besides, Her Majesty holds extremely strong views upon the subject of domestic fidelity; no wonder the news gave her a shock. White with rage, her first impulse was to inform the Kaiser; if he heard of it indirectly, he might be moved to think the Princess was at fault in this domestic drama, for Sophie Louise has many enemies in the palace. Pressing the sucking baby closer to her bosom, the Empress burst into His Majesty's room. Ah, Frederick Leopold had anticipated her; explanatory letters and telegrams upon the Kaiser's table told *his* side of the row! "Your sister's vanity and jealousy have brought on this scandal. Read!" cried the Emperor. "It runs in the family, I presume. Günther" (the Duke of Schleswig, brother of Auguste Victoria) "is likewise in trouble, ruining himself for that infamous bag-o'-bones, Otero."

Nothing more was heard of the conversation between the imperial couple, except that the Empress begged her husband "to speak quietly," but a few minutes later the Kaiser himself came running from the room and alarmed the whole castle by the report that Prince Joachim was in convulsions.

Poor little fellow! fear and anger, acting upon the mother, poisoned her milk and him. I can see him to-day, as then, his disproportionately big head and face purple, the globes of the eyes turned upward, fingers clenched in the palms, and the body and limbs in violent spasmodic contractions. The Empress, in her fear that the baby would choke, had torn off every particle of his clothing and stood by, helpless and horrified beyond measure. At last, Mrs. Matcham, the English nurse, came running in, followed by the physician on duty. "It's

epilepsy; I feared as much!" she cried, fortunately in her native tongue. Then carrying the child to a corner of the room where an electric fan was stationed, she said to the doctor: "Won't you please ask their Majesties and these people here to withdraw, every one of them? It is impossible to bring the young 'un around while the air is obstructed."

This, Prince Joachim's first fit,—the first, at least, that assumed alarming proportions,—lasted nearly forty minutes, an eternity for all who had seen the child. The worst over, it was, however, given out that our fears had been exaggerated. There had been "no fits or spasms," our ocular observations notwithstanding;—"just a little stomach trouble," that was all. What liars these body-physicians are, though, to be sure, abdominal-epilepsy—as such the case was finally diagnosed—is a "stomach trouble" in the same way as insanity may be put down as an affection of the head. "The disease," continued the medical judges, "was caused by malformation of the skull, some parts of which appear uncommonly thick." Here the written report broke off. It would have been *lèse majesté* to even allude, black on white, to Dr. Leuthold's findings as to the fashionable agency responsible for bringing into the world afflicted children such as Joachim.

The Prince remained in a precarious condition for a year or longer. During that time he was really never out of danger, and his head-nurse, assisted by Dr. Zunker, often complained that the anxiety was killing her, especially when Her Majesty was away and the entire responsibility rested with her. While the Empress was in Felixstowe, little Joachim hovered between life and death continually. Dr. Zunker dared not leave the palace, and a carriage and pair was kept in readiness at the Stadt Schloss, night after night, to bring other physicians from the city at a

moment's notice. The telegraph operators, too, were kept on duty overnight, so that the mother might be notified, if necessary.

When, at last, Her Majesty returned, *Fräulein* Stahl, the same who is mentioned in another part of this book, was engaged to take care of the Prince at night-time, and this wise old woman succeeded admirably in comforting the little one and securing for him the rest he stood so much in need of. Once the Empress entered the baby's room late in the afternoon, and observing that the child had not yet been bathed, said, disapprovingly: "Why, *Fräulein* Stahl, it's nearly three o'clock and the Prince is still in his night-gown."

The old woman raised her eyes, but not in a timid manner. "Majesty," she replied, in her abrupt style, "the child has not slept all night; Majesty should thank God that he is sleeping now. A servant wench would probably wake him up to put on his clean bib and tucker; his *nurse* refuses to do so."

Some time later a curious experiment was tried. *Fräulein* von Gersdorff brought a bull-finch, one warranted not to sing, into the baby's room, begging the Empress to let the bird remain.

"But the Kaiser won't like it; I dare not permit it," said Her Majesty.

"Then Your Majesty must hide the bird. It is absolutely necessary that he should be somewhere about the Prince's person."

The *Hofdame* went on to say that, according to an old legend current at her home, a bull-finch when brought into direct contact with an epileptic draws the malady upon himself, while gradually freeing the afflicted person of the curse. Auguste Victoria thereupon permitted the bird to remain, and while Prince Joachim's general health did not

improve at first, the intervals between the spasms became somewhat longer. After three weeks the bird died in convulsions. Another was purchased, and that one, too, succumbed under like symptoms. Nowadays, Joachim is never without a sympathetic bull-finch, a few of the species being always kept on hand, as the birds seldom survive a single month after being placed in the Prince's room. As for His Royal Highness, he is not yet free from the awful curse, but the evil seems to have lessened its hold upon him. What was *grand mal* once is now *petit mal*, as the French say.

I forgot to state that the Empress, after Joachim's first attack, continued to suckle the baby, though the physicians had ordered him weaned, the great authority on children's diseases, Professor Henoeh, from Berlin, having diagnosed Her Majesty's milk as positively poisonous to the little one. However, Her Majesty considered it her sacred duty to nurse the child, and weaned him only when the Kaiser, urged on by his sisters and other friends, commanded her to desist.

## CHAPTER IV

The Empress sometimes attends luncheon in grand toilet and *décolleté*, a habit English women pronounce shocking and that Americans regard as ridiculous in the extreme. It is, however, nothing of the kind in Germany, where evening-dress is quite the proper thing, if not the obligatory one, on all occasions of ceremony or social intercourse of a higher order. The candidate for office booked for audience with a Minister of State at 9 A.M.—they are all early risers in the Fatherland—will come down to breakfast in swallow-tail and white tie, and afterward strut his way to the palace without an overcoat, or wear that garment wide open, if wintry breezes compel him to cast this sort of shadow over his festive raiment. If a gentleman of birth and position is forced to appear in Court even in the character of a defendant, he goes fully panoplied as he would to an evening party with a lady upon his arm. The infamous Chancellor Leist, who as acting Governor of German East Africa drove the natives to rebellion by his atrocities, and was recalled and prosecuted, went to his trial before the Potsdam tribunal in regulation ball costume, white kid gloves and all, the lapel of his coat strewn with decorations and topped off by a gay *boutonnière*. And, stranger still, the public prosecutor and the judges likewise wore evening-dress under their robes of office. Swallow-tail coats are in order for five-o'clock teas, as well as for mid-day weddings, in Germany, and the guests at

nuptial ceremonies often have opportunity to see as much of the bride's upper anatomy as did the attendants at George the Third's and Princess Charlotte Sophia's marriage, "when the purple and ermine cloak worn by Her Royal Highness, soon to be a Majesty, was so heavy as to drag down her waist and completely denude one-half of her body."

Her Majesty follows the general fashion of the country, and, it may be added, accedes to it the more readily, as she dearly loves to exhibit her shoulders. Luncheon in the Neues Palais and in the Berlin Schloss, moreover, is really the dinner of Germany, as it includes soup, that dish concerning which Heinrich Heine says "he could not imagine a world where the sun never shone and people never knew soup introducing the principal meal of the day." On the menu cards, luncheon figures as *Zweites Frühstück* (*déjeuner à la fourchette*), but that is merely a concession to the Kaiser's household Anglomania. The six-o'clock meal is styled *Mittagstafel* (dinner), yet, when taken *en famille*, includes only such courses as ordinarily are provided for a supper.

*Souper* is served at nine o'clock sharp,—whether their Majesties are at home, at the theatre, or at a reception is immaterial. It consists invariably of weak tea, cold meats, and salads, things that can be easily transported to places of amusement, if necessary. All the royal theatres are provided with "cold larders."

Altogether there are four principal meals at the Berlin Court, three of which are usually attended by guests and the highest officials of the household. The Kaiserin makes it a point to appear on all these occasions in different styles of dress. That would mean a change of costume four times daily, and as many hours spent in affairs of the toilet. How Schwerdtfeger and Gleim would rejoice if

these calculations were accurate! As a matter of fact, Auguste Victoria wears seven or eight different gowns every twenty-four hours, and tries on from ten to twelve to see which suit her best. If, for instance, a sea-green demi-toilet is ordered for the theatre, the wardrobe-women must arrange all dresses of that color and description on the numerous skeleton puppets that line the walls in Her Majesty's clothes-presses, each robe having its own set of accompaniments as to stockings, shoes, petticoats, wraps, and head-gear. About an hour and a half before the carriage starts, the Empress comes in to inspect her treasures and to decide what she will wear. But that does not end matters. Frequently, when her toilet is nearly finished, the august lady discovers that the shade chosen is not becoming to her on that particular day. "It makes me look old," or, "I am afraid this color will not do under the electric light,—what does Your Excellency think?" This to Countess Brockdorff, Grand-mistress.

Of course, that lady agrees with the implied opinion, and "Away with this confounded toggery!" as Napoleon the Great said when divesting himself of his coronation robes. Another costume, with its numerous accessories, is brought from the mighty closets, and the process of robing is renewed, while probably two thousand people or more, having paid speculators' prices for the honor of sitting under the same roof with the imperial couple, are loyally wondering why the overture is delayed.

The Kaiserin seldom wears the same dress twice unless it has previously undergone a radical change in her own workshop, where she keeps from four to six dress-makers busy all the year round. Three Vienna *robes de chambre*, of which more anon, are the only exceptions to this rule, that, by the way, is of her own making. On an average, Her Majesty uses up, or at least buys, from two hundred to



two hundred and twenty-five costumes in the course of a year, some costing as little as one hundred dollars. The bills for others, by their size, give her Chief of Cabinet, Baron von Mirbach, palpitations. It was, I believe, in 1890 when some wicked sheets first commenced the ribald talk about the Kaiserin's debts at dry-goods and millinery stores. The clerks and book-keepers of several great firms in the capital had come together for a quiet confab and compared notes. "*Donnerwetter!*—and thou, also, Brutus?" They did a little figuring, and the figures got into the papers, and both their Majesties stormed and raged and made divers promises to each other. The Kaiserin, on her part, vowed to punish the metropolitan shop-keepers for their indiscretion, by taking away her patronage altogether. Of course, unforeseen events, caprice, and sudden requirements, dictated by royal visits or a round of festivities, compelled Auguste Victoria time and again, during the last five or six years, to disregard her pledge, but it is true, nevertheless, that the majority of Berlin dealers sporting the legend "Purveyor to Her Majesty, the Empress and Queen," on giant signs highly embellished with crowns and eagles, have little purveying to do for the palace ever since complaints of tardy payment on the part of a certain imperial customer crept into print. Nowadays the greater number of grand toilets, so styled, are furnished by Marriscou, in Vienna; riding and hunting habits come from Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and a Düsseldorf tailor keeps the Kaiserin's ever-yawning clothes-presses supplied with woollens, for the theory, still *en vogue* in some of the smaller German courts, that royalty durst not wear anything save silk, has long been exploded with us.

Aside from these regular purveyors, the Paris firm Petrus, having a branch Unter den Linden, succeeds three or four times per annum in selling some exquisite pieces of finery

in the palace, and similar good luck, even in a more pronounced degree, attends the persistent efforts of a fashionable Berlin dress-maker, Madame Philip, a rotund old party, who, appreciating Her Majesty's aversion to meet any of the serving classes, never allows an employee of hers to go within a mile of the royal residence, transacting all business in person, or with the assistance of her daughter. She runs errands, alters, remakes, improves, and suggests, as whim or occasion requires, and upon her bowed head all-highest displeasure descends at regular intervals; but it's all business, and, I take it, duly registered in the account-books. For my own part, I would prefer the assistance of a tidy clerk or saleswoman to that of the fussy madame who is always half beside herself with loyal pride on the one hand and mean submissiveness on the other.

Madame Philip's success, by the way, proves the truth of the old adage, that, by pandering to the weaknesses of the mighty, poor folks may "correct" their fortune.

It happens quite frequently that the great business houses of the capital ask permission to exhibit their latest offerings, or some special fabrics and designs, before Her Majesty; and as the Empress always wants new things, and must have the pick of all novelties, that boon is usually granted, the firms being requested to send their goods early in the morning. If the Court is established in Potsdam, the salespeople arrive with their boxes on the nine-o'clock train, and are at once shown to the wardrobe-rooms, while lackeys bring forth the necessary number of puppets and figure-heads to mount the dresses, wraps, capes, or *lingerie*. Thus the succession of lofty parlors is turned into a bazaar, an impression heightened by the fact that one of the distinguishing features of the great department stores, namely: "Prices marked in plain figures," is retained. True, this sort of thing does not strike one as

consistent with imperial dignity; but Baron von Mirbach, ever mindful of his precious budget, makes the tacking on of prices a *conditio sine qua non*, while the Empress, affecting not to see the saucy tickets, more often than not regulates her purchases in accordance with their tenor.

On bazaar days, as the clothes exhibitions are dubbed, the Kaiserin is apt to forego all customary occupations in her eagerness to see and acquire, if possible, the many beautiful things displayed. The children are surrendered to the tender care of tutors and governesses after a hasty "Good-morning," and the tour of inspection among the richly appressed dummies begins shortly after breakfast, *Kammerfrau* von Hahnke, Countess Keller, and *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff invariably accompanying Her Majesty, not because they are blessed with special good taste, but in view of the fact that they form a trio of unconditional assenters, willing to go to pieces before any hideous garment that the Empress, who has no ideas of her own, may fancy. I remember that, in the fall of 1891, Madame Sobersky, head of a well-known Berlin firm, brought, among numerous other wraps, a light carriage-cloak to the palace, a frog-green affair with plaited furbelows, a very monster of ugliness, but undoubtedly *recherché*, for it seemed well-nigh impossible that anything so unsightly should have been duplicated and sold. Countess Brockdorff and myself expressed ourselves to that effect pretty plainly, but the Empress, who never, by any chance, knows what suits her complexion, fell in love with the horrible thing at first sight, donned it, and, regarding herself in a mirror, asked the trio what they thought of her choice.

"Majesty looks as sweet as a picture," cried the Hahnke at once; Countess Keller said something to the same effect, and *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff vowed she had never

encountered anything half so beautiful in her life, and she has seen a good many days, this maid of honor. So that paragon of ugliness was bought for five hundred marks, and the Empress wore it twice, the second time in the Kaiser's company, during a drive to the Thiergarten, when His Majesty proposed the following riddle: "Dona," he said, "why does your coat remind me so vividly of my trips to Norway?"

The Kaiserin gave it up, and "Willie" volunteered the abominable solution: "Because it is the color of *mal de mer*."

But it is not always that the Kaiserin determines to buy in a hurry. The inspection frequently occupies the better part of the day, with intervals for meals and drives, and is continued in the evening before retiring. To try on a dozen costumes, twice as many waists, and half a wagon-load of wraps and mantles, such an exhaustive task has no terrors for Auguste Victoria. On the contrary, she delights in it, and is never in better humor than when so occupied; whether she has the inclination or the money to buy is immaterial. Hers is clearly a case of bargain-counter mania, with the disagreeable features concerning the "help" emphasized.

Poor saleswomen, clerks, and carriers, driven from their hard couches in one of the detestable Berlin *pensions* (boarding-houses), or perchance an equally poor home, they hasten to the royal residence at an unearthly hour, arrayed in their best, after a hurried and insufficient breakfast. Arrived at the palace, they must set to work exhibiting their treasures, and then retire to the hall, or, if one be particularly lucky, to the antechamber. That means wait, wait, wait. The great lady whom they are to serve is supposed to know nothing of the discomforts of others, and the liveried officials and menials swarming in the

corridors and yawning in all corners care even less than their august mistress. The porters and salesmen may go to the canteen, a sort of military mess-room, established for the benefit of coachmen and grooms in a wing of the stable buildings, where refreshments are sold at a little over cost price; but what are the women to do, seeing that no person, high or low, can obtain so much as a cup of tea in the Kaiser's palace without special orders from the grand-master, unless his or her name appears on the list of regular retainers? Besides, if they leave their post even for ever so short a while, there is a probability that they may not be on hand at the very moment when wanted. The Kaiserin may take it into her head to ask certain questions, and woe to the poor clerk that does not readily respond to the summons. A furious note will acquaint the firm of its employee's negligence and the "affront" given to Her Majesty, and off goes the guilty one's head.

I shall never forget the pathetic spectacle these poor saleswomen present,—ill-fed, weak, hopeful,—the wall-flowers of trade! Some had to remain until within a few minutes of the last train, then hurry off on foot with their order-book blank. Surely that was no fault of theirs; but would the head of the firm take so charitable a view? I know of more than one case where he did not, and where the Kaiserin's fitfulness caused persons to be dismissed.

However, there is frequently a reason other than caprice, or want of money, for Her Majesty's refusals. Schwerdtfeger and Gleim, being most accomplished needle-women and designers, need only hint that they can do as well as the store-keeper to be at once commanded to copy the submitted patterns for use in the household tailor-shop. Pilfering a trusting milliner's fashion ideas is not a dignified business for the German Empress to be in; but, as

*Herr* von der Knesebeck apologetically remarked, "Fredrick William II buncoed the Jews by forcing them to purchase wild boar from the royal hunting-grounds, while at the same time they were forbidden to trade in the article, and were told to send the game to the hospitals if religious scruples prohibited consumption at home. And Fredrick the Great," continued the learned chamberlain, "was a counterfeiter of money, which, moreover, he adorned with the likeness of Princes entirely innocent of such nefarious practices."

Such are courtly sophisms,—a queer mess of rascality and heartless philosophy. The proper way to "live down" one's ancestors, it would seem, is to imitate their vices and repeat their crimes *en miniature*. It has always been a wonder to me that these sharp performances have never been found out, or that, if discovered, they could always be hushed up. What "copy" they would make for the *Judenpresse* (the German liberal papers opposed to anti-Semitism), for the whole process of Jew-baiting, as carried on in the German-speaking countries, grounds upon the assumption that the chosen people are more apt to take undue advantage of others than the rest of mankind, Christians especially. And here we find the German Empress, high protectress of Lutheranism, a Princess who, above all, aspires to the title of "church-builder," in the business particularly and essentially branded as "Sheeny tricks." Can it be that the opposition in Germany is still imbued with those sentiments which, in 1848, led the revolting subjects of His Highness of Sachsen-Altenburg to proclaim the republic in the words: "The monarchical system has ceased to exist; the country is a republic, with our Duke as sovereign"?

The well-known French firm of M. Jules Bister, Unter den Linden, has been victimized for years by the imposition

described. Bister makes a specialty of sending new "creations" of *lingerie*, fancy petticoats, *négligés*, and hats to the Schloss and Neues Palais for inspection, and has often complained that the goods are returned crushed and showing signs of much handling, M. Bister probably blaming the ladies-in-waiting, or his own employees. If he could have seen Schwerdtfeger and Gleim go over his costly Paris models with a tape-measure, while myself or Countess Brockdorff jotted down the color and lace combinations, and the sort of lining and embroidery used, he would have played quite a different tune, I reckon.

Latterly the Kaiserin's want of decision causes Berlin shop-keepers to regard a royal command to send goods on approval in anything but a joyful spirit; and small wonder, for nine times out of ten their good offices, expense, and loss of time are thrown away. Thus, in June, 1892, to mention only one instance, the Empress ordered four or five metropolitan business houses, making a specialty of infants' ware and furniture, to despatch to the palace a variety of cradles and small brass bedsteads suitable for the child she expected. As may be imagined, the firms so honored fairly outdid themselves in the race to furnish the finest and latest on hand. Twelve hours after the royal command had been given out, a succession of furniture vans rolled into our court-yard, and a bazaar, filled with lovely creations in the *layette* line,—as the salespeople uniformly put it,—was soon established in one of the big halls. Among these treasures Her Majesty wandered for a week or ten days, selecting this or that one minute and rejecting it an hour later. The *embarras de richesse* bewildered her, and, though knowing full well that she had only five hundred marks to spend, the very costliest offerings, exceeding her modest stipend twice or even three times over, engaged her fancy to the exclusion of all others.

The shop-keepers who had denuded their warerooms and show-windows of *chefs-d'œuvre* to please the Empress, got tired after waiting a week, and remonstrated with the Court-marshal, petitioning for the return of their goods. That gentleman explained to Her Majesty that she must decide without further delay; but it was not until the Berliners had actually begun to remove their property, a fortnight after sending the things on approval, that Auguste Victoria chose among the remainder. On September 13 the little stranger arrived,—the Royal Princess Victoria-Louise of to-day.

But to return to those *robes de chambre* which Her Majesty likes so well as to exempt them from the rule that disqualifies articles of wearing apparel for use after having served their purpose once or twice. These *Schlaf-röcke* have a history, and remind me of a passage in William D. Howells's preface to the memoirs of Frederick the Great's "little sister" Wilhelmina, whom the American author styles "Princess Royal of Prussia," though she was only a royal Prussian Princess, Prussia being one of the strongholds of Salic law. Howells tells us that the poor Margravine's father, "though rich and powerful, was coarse and mean in most things, and bullied the Queen quite like a King in pantomime." Does he really suppose that the ignoble practice of browbeating a sovereign lady begins and ends with the first Frederick William and the king-popinjays of mimicry? Sympathizers of the monarchical system, who write of royal life under the direct influence of the august persons alleged to be portrayed, and *littérateurs* never permitted to invade the palace's sacred precincts,—a Louise Mühlbach and a certain American follower of hers, for instance,—may agree with Howells, and it is certainly pleasant to do so, but candor compels me to destroy that cheerful illusion



so far as it may apply to the Imperial Court of Berlin. "Willie" and "Dona" have their little unpleasantnesses and homely rows like any ordinary couple, and, what is quite self-evident in the Fatherland, the man always gets the better of his weaker half, the Kaiser's superior intellect, his impetuosity and unequivocal bluntness of speech, making his ascendancy a foregone conclusion. Besides, the Empress is deadly afraid of her lord, and readily capitulates whenever and wherever His Majesty signifies disapproval. And here the eternal sameness of royal and common folks is again emphasized,—most of the quarrels between the imperial couple are occasioned by questions of dress, or the difficulties of paying for the same. So it was with the Vienna dressing-gowns which seemed destined, at one time, to become the source of really serious trouble in our *ménage*. Auguste Victoria had ordered the precious robes during the excitement of her first visit as German Empress to the Austrian capital; flushed by unprecedented honors showered upon her by the Court, government, and city, she had fondly persuaded herself that there was no such thing as a limited budget, and had given orders to tradespeople in right royal style,—the style of the hapless Ludwig of Bavaria. She wanted the newest, the very finest, and the most expensive, and it must be admitted that the *Hoflieferant* proved himself equal to the occasion. Life in the Kaiserin's suite was never pleasanter than during the week that followed the arrival of those masterpieces from Wien. The Kaiserin held regular *levées*, a thing she had never before attempted, so anxious was she to exhibit her treasures to the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, and her friends generally. On these occasions she used to wear the least costly of the imported gowns, which was of sea-green cloth, fashioned in Watteau style, and having a velvet train three yards long ;

the entire front and the hem of the train were embroidered in real gold, each flower-leaf being valued at twenty-five florins.

Of the other robes, arranged on dummies, one was of bright pink damask with a white velvet front, silver threaded and edged all around with ostrich feathers of the most perfect white; but the third was easily the *pièce de résistance*, being of red velvet and of a shade especially manufactured for the purpose; the ingredients of the dye were a secret, reserved for Her Majesty's exclusive use. This gown was cut extremely *décolleté*, the sleeves were short, and there was a profusion of lace—white, black, and red—on the train and around the neck and arms. Surely, no woman could be blamed for glorying in such exquisite robes, but possession, like rank, carries with it certain responsibilities. On October 1, 1890,—quarter-day, if you please,—Grand-master von Mirbach received the Vienna tailor's and milliner's bill with its four noughts, and florins at that! "The poor Baron," says an eye-witness, "was nearly knocked silly when he read the figures. '*Woher nehmen und nicht stehlen?*'" ("How can I pay this without resorting to thievery?") "he cried, after partly recovering his composure; 'our treasury is as empty as a cornet's who spends his allowance in advance; I hardly know how to pay Her Majesty's laundry bills for the ensuing three months.'

"Kammerherr von der Knesebeck spoke up at this juncture. 'The Kaiser,' he said, 'remarked this morning that he was quite unable to decide on a birthday present for Her Majesty. Why not propose that he assume payment of this bill? It will save His Majesty the trouble of choosing among a hundred and one offerings by the different purveyors and right Your Excellency's budget, which is, after all, the main thing.'"

Of course, *Herr* von Mirbach jumped at this chance, and the ball was set rolling after the old-approved style, viz.: the entire palace *camarilla* combined to persuade the Emperor "that it was his all-gracious will and command to present the Kaiserin, on the occasion of her birthday, with three certain *robes de chambre*," the price of which exceeded his Chancellor's annual salary.

Many readers will think Kaiser William too proud and self-assertive a personage to be wheedled. Let those doubters consider the Court recipe for such acts of gentle inveiglement and own themselves sold. It runs somewhat after the fashion of Genesis, chapter iv, verse 18: "And Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech," etc. *Herr* von der Knesebeck told Baron Mirbach, Baron Mirbach told the Kaiser's Court-marshal, the Court-marshal told the Master of Ceremonies, the Master of Ceremonies told the Royal House-marshal, the Royal House-marshal told the Vice Grand-master of Ceremonies, the Vice Grand-master of Ceremonies told the Seneschal, the Seneschal told the Chief of Cabinet, the Chief of Cabinet told the Chief of the *Maison Militaire*, the Chief of the *Maison Militaire* told the Imperial Adjutants, and the whole set dinned it into the all-highest ears until the Emperor thought it his own "most gracious" idea, and consequently little short of divine inspiration. The three dressing-gowns were yanked into the royal presence—one literally came off the Kaiserin's back—and found immediate favor with William, who was just then contemplating his order of Cabinet, creating the half-rococo, half-savage Prussian Court-dress, a state paper, be it remembered, in which the word "pants" occurs twelve times. His Majesty ordered the bill paid without looking at it, and Auguste Victoria and her Court-marshal breathed easy once more.

Perhaps it is the thought of her Vienna triumphs which makes the robes so dear to Auguste Victoria that she cannot find it in her heart to cast them off like the rest of her things. They are styled "the perennial" by her women, who naturally try their best to disgust the Kaiserin with her clothes so they may the quicker be turned over to them and the second-hand dealer. All house-dresses pass to the minor mistresses of the robes after merely nominal use, while the grand and demi toilets go by right to the ladies-in-waiting and highest lady officials of the palace. That at the Berlin Court the majority of valuable costumes is otherwise disposed of is the special misfortune of the Countesses von Brockdorff and von Keller and *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff, and is a subject to which I will presently return. Those Vienna dressing-gowns are still in Her Majesty's possession, and occasionally see the light of day, though the Kaiserin now refrains from wearing either of the trio at family parties and semi-social events, as she was in the habit of doing a couple of years ago. I remember a family supper held at the Berlin Schloss in the beginning of March, 1891, for which the Empress issued autograph invitations marked at the bottom: "*Im Hauskleide*" ("Come in your wrapper"). Only two ladies and one man were bidden, the Princess Frederick Leopold, the Hereditary Princess of Meiningen, and Duke Günther of Schleswig, the sister, sister-in-law, and brother of the Kaiserin.

The real object of the invitation, namely, a wish to dazzle the other women with her red velvet *robe de chambre*, Her Majesty had confided to the royal Duke, and His Highness had considered it a good joke to blab. The Princesses Charlotte's and Louise Sophie's first thought was, of course, to fight fire by fire, but when a tour of the great Berlin establishments yielded nothing in the line of

dressing-gowns that could be considered a trump to Her Majesty's acquisitions, the ladies determined to get the better of their imperial relative in a less dignified manner. When, at nine o'clock sharp, the Kaiserin entered her writing-cabinet where the repast was to be served (the dining-room is too extensive an apartment for the *petit cercle*), she was met by her sisters, who, contrary to etiquette, still wore their carriage-wraps and hats.

"We have followed your command to the letter," spoke up the Hereditary Princess, being the bolder of the two, "but did not care to expose ourselves *en d shabill * before the domestics. With your permission, we will keep on our cloaks until supper is served and we are *entre nous*."

Her Majesty, on whom Charlotte's subtle sarcasm was entirely lost, looked puzzled at first, but when her eyes lit upon the smiling face of Duke G nther, it occurred to her that she had been sold. However, she was not to betray any vexation, for that would give "the Meiningen" opportunity for renewed onslaughts. "Very well," she said, "we can have the *service de confiance*," and Countess Brockdorff communicated an order to that effect to the House-marshal.

The *service de confiance*, adopted for the present uses of the Court, is not the one made famous by Frederick the Great's suppers with the dancer Barbarina, but a very large silver platter for the centre of the table, so constructed as to permit each diner to serve himself or herself without the slightest inconvenience out of a compartment of the dish, each compartment holding the entire contents of a course, and a ladle and fork pointing toward each cover.

Once the platter is set upon the table and the crystal wine carafes distributed, the *Kammerj gers* may be sent away and never missed. This was done, even to Her Majesty's body-chasseur, and while Duke G nther filled the tulip-shaped

bumpers, bearing the Great Frederick's monogram in gold, the Princesses threw off their wraps.

Was ever a supper-party more conspicuous for dress and undress than the women in the picture now disclosed? The Empress in her magnificent red gown, her neck and breast and arms covered with jewels, those great pearls and brilliants she inherited from the first Kaiserin. Behold, as an offset to this uncalled-for splendor, Madame Charlotte in a bedraggled satin petticoat, considerably frayed at the bottom, and sporting a loose waist of doubtful white with several buttons missing and laces torn and battered. Her Royal Highness wore no corsets, and had her hair in curl-papers for the most part. The Princess Frederick Leopold looked a shade less slatternly than her sharp-witted sister-in-law, but the wrapper she had on was neither in good taste nor particularly clean, being of the pink and light-blue variety that second-hand actresses affect in boudoir scenes on and off the stage.

Auguste Victoria was speechless with rage. "Lottchen" had evidently set out to insult her, and to make the outrage the more painful had inveigled Princess Louise Sophie to join in her scheme of masquerading. Yet so cleverly had she mixed her cards, and the *quid pro quo* had been carried to such a successful issue, that to quarrel with her meant to invite ridicule from the whole Court, not even excepting the Emperor. The only safe course for Her Majesty to pursue under the circumstances was to completely ignore their Highnesses' motives and treat the impertinent mummery as a huge joke. That conviction flashed across Her Majesty's mind, and decided her immediate demeanor. "I suppose my invitation was stupidly worded," said the Kaiserin, as soon as she had recovered from the shock, "but I assure you, *mesdames*, although no man save Günther was asked, and although carnival is near

at hand, I had no intention of asking you to sup with me in rags. Why, Charlotte, does the Prince permit you to go about the house in this fashion?"

The Kaiser's eldest sister laughed. "As His Highness takes such good care not to pay for my toilets, it would ill become him to quarrel about anything I choose to wear," she said, mockingly, continuing in the same vein: "let us hope that His Majesty will not take it into his head to disturb our party."

This fear was fortunately not realized, fortunately for the Empress! "Willie," you must know, has a keen sense of the ludicrous, and the Princesses certainly had his wife at a disadvantage. Neither did the incidents of the supper, that was so fateful to the Kaiserin's pride, become public among the retinue, thanks to extraordinary precautions. For my part, I gathered the details from the vivid description jovial Duke Günther rendered at a recent *soirée* in his castle Primkenau.

## CHAPTER V

The winter's round of festivities usually leaves the Empress's exchequer in more than the ordinary state of exhaustion, and Her Majesty's noble resolve never to don a gown more than twice would certainly have to be amended in the summer months by some such proviso as "state of finances permitting," if it was not for the Grand Turk.

Ay, the Lord Sultan of Believers, Padishah and Grand Seignior, the same gentleman who makes a specialty of leading the Powers by the nose and who occasionally arranges a bit of St. Bartholomew Night for "Christian dogs" in the cold glare of day! The Prussian Majesties are Abdul-Hamid's devoted friends ever since their joint visit of state to Constantinople in 1890, and the Sultan would not be the shrewd diplomat and political equilibrist he undoubtedly is if he did not appreciate these sentiments at their full value, for if it be true that the Powers' jealousies are responsible for the perpetuation of the unspeakable Turk in Europe, it must likewise be owned that William the Second's friendly attitude toward the High Porte, during 1896 and 1897 especially, did much to disconcert the European concert, and still continues in the same line.

There has been talk that the Kaiser was well paid for his good offices. Five million francs were said to have come from the Tscheragan Serai, mirrored in the Bosphorus, to the Schloss, overshadowing an arm of the Spree, and



our Court-marshals, hoping to profit by this sudden wind-fall, were in a very happy mood in consequence; but if this amount really changed hands from Sultan to Kaiser, it was presumably used to pay off some pressing debts to Krupp, Baron Stumm, and others. The prevailing penury at Court was certainly not relieved, and the customary offerings of the Padishah arrived as in former years, only a little more promptly. Abdul sent William long-maned ponies from Barbary, and our lord repaid his autocratic colleague with some of the choice product of Trakehnen. As usual, precious porcelains, turned out by the Royal Berlin works, had found their way by New Year into the splendid harem on the bosom of the Sweet Waters, and the fat sultanas and kadyns returned the compliment by selecting for the Frankish Empress the very choicest of Oriental cloth, linens, gauzes, and lace garments for wear during the heated term. These presents to Her Majesty arrive regularly in April, or the beginning of May, each year, and there being whole bales of the various textures and shades, Auguste Victoria is a very happy woman in consequence. She can have new dresses by the dozen now, and no bills to be dreaded, for Schwerdtfeger and Gleim are well able to have demi-toilets and house-gowns properly made in the home tailoring-shop, both being students of the most advanced fashions.

The number of seamstresses in this establishment is always largely increased in the spring, and I have seen as many as forty wielders of needle and thread working under Frau von Haake's nominal direction after the Sultan's presents arrived. All heads of department in the palace, it should be remembered, must be noble-born, and while the lady of the bed-chamber knows no more how to fit a waist or "hang" a skirt than I do of such things, or of the mountains and canals on Mars for that

matter, she is excellently well qualified to find fault with low-born menials that do understand them.

Whenever I see the poor wardrobe-women and tailor-esses driven and abused, I cannot help admiring these persons, who not only suffer from imperial quarrelsomeness, but, in addition, have to put up with the spiteful tongue of a powerful intermediary. Still, such is the attraction of a Court, that of its lower officials and servants none resign, while very few lay themselves open to dismissal. Various perquisites, the promise of a pension, and last, but not least, an occasional smile from the royal master or mistress, easily offset the disagreeable and distressing features of life within the Crown's shadow. I have seen Schwerdtfeger positively nettled but two or three times in all the years I observed her daily intercourse with the Empress and Her Majesty's ladies,—once when she had successfully finished a velvet state costume without previously trying it on, and the Kaiserin, instead of saying a few pleasantries, dismissed the poor girl with the words: "*Es hätte besser sein können*" ("It would admit of improvements"). It was a cruel thing to do, considering that the dress, a very pretentious lavender affair costing twenty-five marks per yard, was of perfect fit and workmanship.

"The maid," as *Fräulein* Schwerdtfeger is styled in official language, wept a good deal after this rebuff, but in the end regained her equilibrium and gave up all thoughts of quitting us.

On another occasion—it was just previous to the carnival festivities of 1893, and the Court was established at the Berlin Schloss—Her Majesty was angry with Schwerdtfeger because fully three days had elapsed since the last new costume evolved from the palace establishment. The Empress demanded to know what her people were doing,

and whether they were so busy with their own affairs as to be unable to attend to her needs.

I was present when Schwerdtfeger reported the case to Frau von Haake: "I will not stand such treatment," she said amid sobs; "the Kaiserin was beside herself with rage, and I actually feared she would strike me. She stormed and fumed and called me names."

"Tut, tut!" broke in the gentlewoman, who knows how short-lived these revolts of royal domestics are, "I am afraid you lack in true Christian humility, my girl. If you were truly loyal to the most-high lady, you would construe even her righteous anger into a blessing, for it may teach you that sincere submissiveness of which we all stand in need."

With tales of royal worldliness on the one hand and of woe on the other I could fill many pages of these memoirs, but there would be little profit in such reading aside from a tendency to emphasize the fact that it is absurd to credit those born in the purple with a higher intellect, more finesse, more charity, less pettiness and less penury, than ordinary mortals. However, I will not close this chapter without recording one signal triumph Her Majesty's much-abused women experienced in the course of years, and at her cost too.

In June, 1892, when Auguste Victoria was *en bonne espérance* for the seventh time in twelve years, she selected for the reception of the Queens of the Netherlands a particularly ugly toilet,—a blue satin dress with an orange front and ditto trimmings. The latter, real masterpieces of the embroiderer's art, were very difficult to sew on; but that notwithstanding, Her Majesty ordered them removed and differently placed three times, compelling the seamstresses to work the whole Sunday until late in the night. Of course, the girls were wroth, and on that account not at

all displeased to see that the costume, which had given them so much trouble, was frightfully unbecoming to their mistress when at last she was arrayed in the glaring colors. To make matters still worse for the royal lady, her complexion was in a sadly muddled state just then. We *Hofdamen* felt deeply chagrined about all this, I assure you. However, the Empress had herself to blame, as she selected the colors against everybody's advice, insisting upon their entire suitableness.

We were just debating in our own circle whether it would be prudent to tell Her Majesty what an outrageous figure she cut, when a remark by little Wilhelmina, overheard by one of the maids and in duty reported to Countess von Brockdorff, led to an instant decision and caused the obnoxious dress to be removed without delay.

Think of it! That royal *enfant terrible* said to her mother, on reaching her apartments and probably thinking herself out of ear-shot: "It strikes me *ma tante* looks like one of those cockatoos our soldiers bring from Sumatra."

The *mot* passed from mouth to mouth in the palace, and its appropriateness was generally admitted, under the breath, of course; but if the stories about a contemplated marriage between the houses of Hohenzollern and Orange ever come true, Wilhelmina will certainly regret having used her ready wit against the august "Potsdamer," who may want to take it out of her daughter-in-law in various ways, for the cockatoo story did not remain unknown to her, having come to the all-highest ears, the Emperor's, after much travelling, and William repeated it to "Dona" on the occasion of a domestic row.

As this anecdote indicates, the Empress has little notion of the suitableness of colors. She wears all in rotation,

sometimes half a dozen different shades a day. Let us contemplate, for example, Her Majesty's outfit for January 27, 1893, the Kaiser's birthday. On that day she went to breakfast in a silver-gray gown with demi-train, attended church in the chapel of the Schloss, at eleven o'clock, in a visiting toilet of light damask with pink silk, and appeared at luncheon in blue velvet trimmed with white ostrich feathers. At five o'clock the great state dinner took place, when Her Majesty wore a magnificent gown of red brocaded silk with sable, which she changed for a light-green one, heavy with silver embroidery, later in the evening. On the following night, at the Court ball, the Empress made her appearance in a lavender-colored gown, and, horror of horrors! Grand-mistress Countess von Brockdorff did the same, only that my lady's dress was a shade darker. I shall never forget the looks of injured and haughty astonishment and of cringing and alarmed perplexity with which these august women eyed each other as they met in Her Majesty's *salon*. It was too late for the Countess to change her toilet, and Auguste Victoria's temper was spoiled, anyhow. She retired from the entertainment earlier than usual, and the same night I was commanded to send a despatch to Vienna, ordering an entirely original ball-dress for Carnival, original in color, design, and ornamentation, cost what it will. This marvel of uniqueness arrived in due time, with a bill amounting to five thousand florins. Her Majesty wore it twice, and had the satisfaction of seeing Countess Hohenau, not to mention the Princesses of the blood royal, turn green with envy.

Empress Auguste Victoria's robes of state are not quite the tremendously expensive luxuries the public imagines them to be, for, despite all their gorgeousness, they are for the most part things of "shreds and patches," made over and altered time and again. For ground material, velvets,

gold or silver brocades, heavy satin, or *moiré antique* are used, while the ornaments, thread and gold laces, jewels and embroideries encrusted with precious stones, are furnished by the privy or the Crown *tresor* (treasury). After each function, these toilets are ripped up, and their various component parts are put away for future use. They may not be required for two or three, or even ten or twenty years, but their time will come again by and by. The most expensive parts of the Kaiserin's gala dresses are the trains of cloth of silver or gold that cost all the way from twenty to forty thousand marks. Her favorite train is an affair twenty feet long by eight broad, and six pages scarcely know how to handle it, so heavy is the monster. It is of silver brocade, showing the Prussian eagle and the royal emblems in high-relief and in rich colors. A broad strip of ermine edges this right royal mantle.

In the matter of hats, Auguste Victoria is easily the best-dressed woman in Europe, or has been for the last five or six years. As Princess William, Princess Imperial, and during her early years as Empress, the Kaiserin patronized Berlin milliners exclusively, and the result was not encouraging. Here is what the Princess of Meiningen said when her mother, the Empress Frederick, engaged upon that dangerous journey to Paris: "If you love Auguste and myself, bring us hats, hats, hats, hats! They make beautiful millinery ornaments in this town, but don't know how to put them together. To me a German bonnet always looks like next of kin to a recruit's fatigue-cap, while Berlin hats, even the most elaborate, seem to be fashioned *à la Pickelhaube*."

The same idea pervaded the unusually blunt speech of the Princess Philip of Coburg, who had not yet disgraced herself with her Colonel of Hussars, when, at the close of his Vienna visit in the fall of 1892, the Kaiser, while taking

leave of Her Royal Highness, incidentally remarked that he was unable to decide what to bring his wife. "Get her some hats; she needs them, poor thing," cried King Leopold's eldest daughter, who is credited with having inherited all his wicked traits; "a mere private woman as I am, I would not exchange my coronet for the German diadem if at the same time I were compelled to wear the monstrous head-gear your Berliners turn out." The sally struck home, the more so as William has always entertained a high opinion of this Princess, who, it must not be forgotten, is the elder sister of Stephanie, widow of the late Crown Prince Rudolph.

"His Majesty," says Grand-master Count Eulenburg, who often speaks of the affair, "reddened at first and seemed inclined to answer sharply, but, after a little reflection, confessed complete ignorance of the subject, though all present knew that he makes it his business to order the Kaiserin about in matters of toilet as well as in other respects. 'Admitting, cousin, that you are correct in what you say,' His Majesty finally remarked, 'what am I going to do about it? I have not the time to run around millinery-shops at the moment of leaving, and if I order a number of bonnets to be sent to the *Burg*, the bills will be of such magnitude as to break my treasurer's heart, and perhaps myself too.'

"We all laughed at this suggestion," continued His Excellency, and Her Royal Highness fairly shook with merriment as she exclaimed, semi-tragically: 'For the Lord's sake, William, do not become to us in Vienna what the Tecks are to the Prince of Wales in London, or'' (this with fine sarcasm) "'the Lippes to a certain King of Prussia! To forestall such a calamity, let me offer my humble services. With Your Majesty's permission, I will drive with one of your gentlemen'" (here Her Royal

Highness's eyes lit upon the stalwart form of our friend Moltke) "to my own purveyors, buy what is pretty and not too extravagant in price, and bring my finds in triumph to the station, where we will meet an hour from now in our waiting-room. Is that a bargain?"

"The Kaiser," Eulenburg wound up his story, "sealed the agreement by kissing Her Royal Highness's white hands and arm; but she took him by the head and applied three right royal smacks upon his mouth, those to reconcile him for the osculations of state that he would have to give and endure later in the day, as Her Royal Highness put it."

What a time we had at the Neues Palais, when the Kaiser arrived with six bandboxes filled with "that woman's" selections of finery! Pardon: it is "that woman" no longer; we have discovered her name, and without consulting the Almanach de Gotha, at that. Perish the memory of Stephanie's treachery: "Her Royal Highness, the Princess Philip," of all women, has the sweetest taste and kindest disposition! All-highest lips uttered these honeyed sentiments, and soon the whole Schloss, metaphorically speaking, was at the feet of the august Viennese, who, an hour before, had been considered too *frivole* for even casual mention. Reputations are quickly made and lost at Court. Play into their Majesties' hands, contribute to their charities, fawn upon their little weaknesses, and you are *persona grata* in a jiffy; exhibit the slightest bit of originality conflicting with the maddening humdrum of accepted notions, seek solace from the dreary occupations of the average Court life in hemispheres where goldsticks and bigwigs are not wanted, or, worse still, derided, and your name is put upon the index whether it stands on the first leaves of the Continental peerage or not.

The Philip Coburgs had been tabooed in Potsdam for ever so long,—the Prince for his vicious habits; Her



Royal Highness on account of her many indiscretions, which, though not yet<sup>1</sup> public property, were the subject of pretty plain comment in court circles for years. But having turned milliner for Her Majesty, and assured her a triumph in the hat line, all was forgotten, and now we had to join in the praises of Princess Philip as ardently as once in her condemnation. "We" stands for ladies-in-waiting, the royal Princess, wives of grand officers, seamstresses, *Generalinnen*, wardrobe-women, and, indeed, everybody wearing petticoats in and about the palace, for all these people were commanded to come and gaze at those wondrously fine hats, raised on gilded stands and casting curious shadows over the billiard-table, where they stood on parade, while the bright sunlight was playing about them and the Kaiserin sat near to receive congratulations. The milliners from the Kaiserstadt had indeed surpassed themselves! Could there be anything more dainty than that bottle-green velvet *capote* covered with precious stones in dazzling colors? And the light-blue affair, set off by half a dozen swallows,—did the Empress Eugenie, in her palmiest days, wear anything more *chic*? I thought the Kaiserin looked best in a round, flat, black velvet bonnet, with fiery red aigrette, and broad strings to tie under the chin—the simplest of the lot, which she would wear but seldom.

The head-gear exhibition in the royal billiard-room in the fall of 1892 has since been repeated time and again, and the Kaiser's personal accounts are none the better for the innovation, though Her Majesty's are, as *Herr* von Mirbach assured me, with a faint smile, on one of those events, October 22, 1896, which was Auguste Victoria's

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<sup>1</sup> 1892 is the time referred to. Since then the scandal has become public.

thirty-eighth birthday. Not less than nineteen hats graced her table on that day, and the Emperor, who had bought and paid for them, or at least had agreed to do so, seemed to be as happy and proud of these things of beauty as the recipient of the royal gift. What singular passions these Kings of Prussia cultivate! Frederick II would have only light-pink and blue and white furniture in his palaces, and when his numerous dogs ruined the airy silks, he remarked: "Pshaw! if I kept a Pompadour, the cost would be greater still." William insists upon encouraging his wife's insane extravagance, fanning the flame that consumes his and her personal credit, and at the same time racks his brain for make-believes to persuade the people that he is really a very economical gentleman, married to *Frau* Simplicity!

A fitting illustration to this never-grow-weary farce was furnished by a talk I overheard when ordered by Her Majesty to receive the Princess of Sachsen, after the *grand Cour* of congratulations had begun. I was waiting in the vestibule of the palace, to be on hand the moment Her Royal Highness's carriage arrived, and at my elbow stood the House-marshal, delivering the report of the day to a newspaper representative. "The Kaiser's birthday gift," said Count Puckler, "consisted of a few articles of apparel, just as any good citizen of ordinary means might give his wife. 'Times are too hard and money is too scarce to buy diamonds or trinkets not actually needed.' These are the Emperor's own words; mark them, *mein Herr*. And, please, do not forget to state that our most-gracious sovereign lady fully concurred in this all-highest view. Simplicity is still the watchword at the royal Prussian Court, as in bygone days."

A word about the distribution of Court news may be of interest here. Up to a few years ago, an old man, son of a retired royal employee, had a monopoly of them; but

the contract is now in the hands of the official telegraph bureau, which sends a reporter to the *Hoflager* regularly. This gentleman, who must be attired in faultless evening dress, has the *entrée* to the anterooms of both their Majesties at stated hours. There he is allowed to copy the entries of the day-book, kept by the *Kammerdiener* on duty, and which contains minutes of the Kaiser and Kaiserin's official occupations and doings,—when they have risen, when they went on rides or drives, who attended them, whom they have had for dinner, what they propose doing in the evening or next morning, etc.

Interesting as these momentous facts doubtless are, they are inadequate to the wants of *all* newspapers, and so our reporter is continually on the alert for “extras.” Such are clandestinely sold to him in the anterooms, but the best items, I am told, he gathers on leaving the palace over the back-stairs. There the gossips ambush, and sometimes, for a miserable five or ten mark piece, sell him veritable morsels of information.

Next day, when the thing appears in print, the poor scribe is cursed by high and low, and both their Majesties resolve that in the future all doors shall be locked against the reprobate. But what about “the things we *like* to see in the papers,”—anecdotes about “one’s good heart” and about acts of “sublime condescension”? That resolution, hastily made, is just as often abandoned, and the reporter of our vanities is welcomed, or tolerated, year in year out.

Aside from variety in the line of presents, one Queen’s birthday passes exactly like another in the big Potsdam palace. The Kaiser, the children, and the members of the household, the royal relatives, the diplomatic corps, and personal friends offer congratulations one after another. There are receptions, gala meals, concert and theatrical performances,—a long dozen of them,—but the feature

that has always struck me as the most noteworthy was the decoration of the table-covers on which the gifts from high and low (even servants are permitted to contribute) are exhibited. They consist of wreaths, made of flowers, leaves and fruits from the royal gardens, a pretty and original arrangement, exhibiting the choicest products of the Sans Souci vineyards and hot-houses. It is a custom introduced by the great Frederick, who loved his fruit-trees even more ardently than his million dollars' worth of snuff-boxes.



## CHAPTER VI

While the Empress, following her husband's example as much as her own inclination, fully lives up to the maxim of "displaying the insignia of her position," the impecuniosity of her childhood days is shown by the scantiness of her body-linen, which occupies two moderately-sized chests of drawers. Foreigners hear a great deal of the affluence German women enjoy with respect to hempen goods; they read of presses stocked with every variety of the homespun and manufactured article, piled up in stacks of a hundred each, bound with pretty ribbons, and showing many different designs, damask, silk-threaded, and embroidered in colors. It is all very beautiful to look at, and no stranger entering a German house for the second time is spared an introduction to madame's treasures, which are often heirlooms from times immemorial, and which will go to her daughters and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, being increased and enlarged and extended continually. So it has always been, and this state of things will probably continue to puzzle citizens of other countries, though experience may have taught them that, when living with a German family, they cannot, for the life of them, obtain more than one clean sheet in two weeks. Generally speaking, the German housewife regards her linen more as articles of show than of utility, and, besides, a profusion of house linen does not signify a corresponding abundance of *lingerie*.

Of this, history affords at least one august example, which female instructors of young Princesses never fail to mention when lecturing upon cleanliness. I heard *Fräulein* von Perpigna, mistress of the Court of Emperor Frederick's daughters, recount the incident more than once to her charges. "The beautiful Caroline of Brunswick," she used to begin, "brought whole ship-loads of boxes filled with the most exquisite linen with her to London, where she was to see for the first time her affianced husband, the Prince of Wales, afterward George IV; but although the British Ambassador, the Earl of Malmesbury, had implored Her Highness 'to be particular,' explaining that the laundry bills of the ladies of the Court of Carlton House were as high almost as their accounts with the milliners, the princely bridegroom, after embracing her, was forced to turn around with a snort of disgust. 'Harris,' he cried to his equerry, 'I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy.'

"'Sir,' interposed that gentleman, 'had you not better have a glass of water?'

"'No,' answered the Prince, very much out of humor; 'I must tell this to the Queen.'

"The Queen of England," concluded *Fräulein* von Perpigna, "had intended Louise of Strelitz, Your Royal Highnesses' illustrious ancestress, for her son's wife. The King, however, had decided in favor of Caroline. When, therefore, Prince George found himself repelled from, instead of attracted to, his bride, he quite naturally wanted to pour out his complaints into his mother's ears."

Most probably, Auguste Victoria heard this story told in the same homely fashion, and it was not lost upon her, for, though she has been with us since 1881, the servants continue to find fresh reasons for admiring the sovereign lady on account of her extraordinary nicety. I know little about the intimate affairs of other royal personages; but it is strange

to hear my mistress lauded to the skies, or condemned for a spendthrift, according to the speaker's bringing up, because she requires her bath and clean linen for bed and body daily and insists upon washing her hands "almost every hour, and always in warm water." The wonderment is essentially German,—the outcome of Anglo-Saxon animosity; still, with all that, the Kaiserin dares not fly in the face of Prussian tradition. I know I am challenging belief when I say that Princes of this reigning family are not allowed to have more than six shirts, while the *trousseaux* of Princesses must not contain more than twenty-four sets of underwear, "to be renewed annually," yet these facts are mentioned by trustworthy German historians for the last two hundred years. "Even when entering upon a campaign, the royal Hohenzollerns never take more than half a dozen shirts along," says that veracious chronicler, Vehse, and though Carlyle skips it, others state on authority that Frederick the Great went to his grave in a shirt furnished by his *Kammerhusar* Strutzki, none of the late Majesty's linen "being fit for decent burial."

As to the paucity of the *trousseaux* of Prussian Princesses, I need but refer the sceptical to any of the Berlin or Potsdam dealers in *lingerie*, all of whom will endorse my statement with many expressions of woe, and perhaps mention the fact that the case seems not altogether hopeless, seeing that the Empress Frederick, at the weddings of her two younger daughters, Victoria, Princess of Lippe, and Marguerite of Hesse, went beyond the established allowance by adding six pairs of black riding-drawers to the bridal outfits.

Those sable unmentionables!—what a row they caused after their first appearance in a Leipziger Strasse show-window, in the beginning of November, 1890. Some foreign



correspondent had made fun of the royal *Beinkleider*,—leg-clothes, as they are styled,—and the Princess and her mother and the Kaiser all worked themselves into a towering rage over it. But to return to the Kaiserin.

She did not bring much *lingerie* from the tumble-down castle Primkenau (now rebuilt), and, Hohenzollern tradition prohibiting augmentation on an extensive scale, Her Majesty's linen outfit remains of a very poor order. Aside from white petticoats, that are essential to every grand toilet, the Empress has scarcely enough body-linen to last her from one washing day to another, and when she goes on a journey her *Kammerfrau* is not infrequently obliged to visit a draper's shop in the city, where the imperial party stops, and buy a few odd things to help out. I have often accompanied or represented *Frau* von Haake on such errands, and it amused me to observe how the tradespeople regarded our plight. There is, for instance, a shop-keeper in Cassel willing to swear that the Empress requires his goods merely to compensate him for the loss he suffered by the wiping out of the *Kurfürst's* dynasty, a view which makes him contented, and, by assiduous publication, has increased his bank account very considerably in the course of years, for Her Majesty's loyal subjects in the old-time capital are of course anxious to buy in the very store that supplies the wants of the sovereign lady. As to suspecting that the Empress-Queen bought a pair of *Beinkleider* or a single chemise to fill an actual want, the thought would never enter any one's head, for in Germany it is almost a crime to buy linen in less than half-dozen lots; only play-actresses and students do such unconventional things. But what are an imperial Majesty's women to do when the all-highest stock of a dozen pairs of drawers runs out? If it happens at home, the maid on duty sometimes takes a left-off garment and irons it up; but this is permissible

only when the Kaiserin has a cold, as she is in the habit of sniffing her garments over to find out whether or not they have been properly aired, and woe to the attendant found guilty of practising a fraud on the sovereign lady. That the paucity of her *lingerie* is to blame, Auguste Victoria would never admit, and the person brave enough to suggest as much has yet to be born.

Her Majesty's handkerchiefs are the cause of similar troubles. She owns a dozen plain *batiste*, half a dozen color-embroidered and four lace handkerchiefs; but as she insists upon having one of the latter for every demi or full dress affair, her women are obliged to wash these delicate *mouchoirs* in the room. That under the circumstances they cannot last long is very evident, as is also the fact that the German Empress has to go without a fresh handkerchief once in a while, or else has to use one only imperfectly washed.

All Her Majesty's underclothes are made of German "shirting," and are not a bit better than those worn by well-to-do women generally; even her night-dresses are severely plain, not to say ugly. Only when the Emperor returns from one of his journeys his wife surprises him by arraying herself for that one night in a gorgeous robe of *batiste*, richly embroidered and interlaced with ribbons.

In a previous chapter I said the imperial couple did not know the meaning of true comfort. The above emphasizes this estimate, and the fact that of all the people employed in the palace none is capable of regularly attending to the Empress's laundry, or the Kaiser's either for that matter, gives it additional weight. But there is, besides, a very serious aspect to the matter: the person who launders both their Majesties' body-linen being a poor Potsdam woman, who serves numerous families in town besides the all-highest

one, may unwillingly carry disease into the palace. I can never quite rid myself of that fear when

“ — that self-same washerwoman,  
Doing washing for the pair,  
Humming, for their linen cometh  
Every week to wash and air,” —

pushing a covered basket on a wheelbarrow before her. It contains the articles laundered and is to carry back the soiled things. *Frau* Schultze charges the Court stiff prices, and, moreover, occasionally gets her accounts mixed, which leads to petty squabbles.

There have been quarrels about “the King’s dirty linen” before in Potsdam, when Voltaire was the *blanchisseur* and Frederick’s bad poetry the article in want of cleansing; at that period, I believe, the phrases “working for the King of Prussia” and throwing away one’s opportunities became synonymous; but while some of the causes leading to the estrangement of the two philosophers were petty enough, God knows, not even the Frenchman’s alleged auction of candles saved by him out of his allowance at Sans Souci exceeded in point of paltriness the fuss often occasioned in the Neues Palais by *Frau* Schultze’s overcharges or mixing up of accounts.

The Empress, you must know, pays her laundry bills out of her own pocket, and whenever *Frau* Schultze charges her for a couple of handkerchiefs, or perchance a collar belonging to the Kaiser’s list, she grows very indignant and intimates that everybody is robbing her. If, on the other hand, the same happens with regard to *her* things, His Majesty’s *Kammerdiener* raises a row such as one would associate with a trivial bourgeois establishment, perhaps, but never with an imperial household. Those writers on lives royal who forever harp on the sublimity of their patrons

should ask permission to attend the comings and goings of that old washerwoman but once ; they would be speedily cured of their highfaluting notions, and learn that human nature is the same in all stations of life. Great ladies are, after all, but weak women, and a princely establishment does not even obviate the possibility of ignoble circumvention. This the first assistant of the imperial hair-dresser-by-appointment, *Herr* Ardeljana, in Vienna, found out to his sorrow. Ardeljana, of whom more anon, dresses Her Majesty's hair on state occasions ; ordinarily maids perform that office, but in the winter of 1893 the Kaiserin came to the conclusion that the girls would no longer do, and that she was entitled to a *coiffeur* of her own. *Frau* von Haake was accordingly commanded to find such a person, and learning that one of Ardeljana's "artists" was just then on a visit in Berlin, the *Kammerfrau* ordered him to come to the palace. The young man obeyed with many pleasant anticipations, and, after giving complete satisfaction, was told by the Empress that he might remain, although both Haake and Baron von Mirbach opposed the innovation for financial reasons. Indeed, the Court-marshal and Her Majesty had quite a tiff about the matter, into which I myself was drawn to my consummate dismay, for Her Majesty quoted me as having informed her that none of the leaders of fashion in Russia and England would think of doing without the daily attendance of a *friseur*. At any rate, Ardeljana II, as he was called, stayed, and, beginning with March 1, dressed the Empress's hair twice a day. When their Majesties entered upon their Italian tour in the third week of April, to lend additional splendor to the silver wedding of King Umberto and Queen Marguerite, the Viennese was taken along as a matter of course, and that he performed his work successfully is admitted by all in the imperial party. In fact, Queen

Marguerite's ladies, notably the Princess Pallavicini and the Marquise di Breme, importuned me more than once to ask permission of Her Majesty that Ardeljana be "lent" to them to teach their own *coiffeurs* some of his new styles, a request which I had to decline for fear of offending my august mistress.

The Kaiserin took up her summer residence at the Neues Palais immediately upon her return from abroad, and the Viennese remaining with us, it was generally understood that Ardeljana II had at last received his appointment. Therefore I was not surprised when, one morning in August, he asked to see me "on Her Majesty's business."

"*Gnädige Frau*," he cried, as the door closed behind him, and I noticed a change in his appearance: his cheeks, which bore a healthy glow when he first came to the palace, were drawn and haggard and his linen was not of the spruceness becoming to a servant of royalty,—" *Frau Gräfin*," he repeated, "I am hungry, and unless my claim for salary is passed upon, I beg of you to procure for me board and lodging in the palace at once."

This speech dumfounded me, the more so as the man's looks confirmed his words. Hunger stalking in the shadow of the throne! "Tell me how you got into this plight," I said, at the same time pouring out a glass of cognac, which he quickly swallowed.

When the Empress, so ran his story, told him in March last she desired him to remain in her service, he did not bother about obtaining a formal appointment, esteeming Her Majesty's word fully equal to a crested and sealed patent. Even the Court-marshal's refusal to lodge and feed him in the palace he regarded lightly, knowing that his former master, *Herr* Ardeljana, had likewise run amuck of that dignitary at one time and had had the satisfaction of triumphing over the haughty Baron in the end.

So he took a room in the neighborhood of our residence and boarded himself, expecting his affairs to be straightened out day by day. Then came the trip to Rome, on which he was treated like any other body-attendant, and fared exceptionally well. When the Court was established at the Neues Palais, however, he was again compelled to find his own living, and in this way continued until his money gave out, about a week ago. Ever since then his meals had been scanty and far between, and at the time he appeared before me he had not tasted food for eighteen hours. I gave the poor man a mark to procure dinner at the mess-room, and then went in search of Madame von Haake, whom I found in a lively *tête-à-tête* with Baron Mirbach.

"Your Ladyship did wrong to interfere with my department and encourage this fellow," said the marshal hotly, at the moment I entered.

"Pray, quarrel with Her Majesty about that," retorted the *Kammerfrau*. "The Kaiserin ordered me to engage this man, and I executed her commands. That you have no money to pay him is quite another matter. At the same time, I beg Your Excellency not to charge me with messages to our royal mistress on the subject. She forbade me to mention the matter to her, instructing me to tell you, at the same time, that she needed Ardeljana, and that you must find his wages somehow."

Here I stepped in. "It is not a question of salary," I said, "but of preventing a horrible scandal, liable to involve the whole Court." Then I repeated Ardeljana's story as he had recounted it to me, adding: "This half-starved man is now in the mess-room, and I can but advise to send him back to Vienna with a decent compensation. A hungry person is always dangerous, and I tremble lest this one tell his experience in the Kaiser's palace to *Herren* Bebel and Liebknecht."

I learned next day that *Herr* von Mirbach sent for Ardeljana II after our interview, offering a compromise, by the terms of which he was to receive a hundred and fifty marks and his fare to Vienna, provided he would sign a paper waiving all further claims. Of course, the man rejected the proposition and a noisy scene followed, in which Mirbach and Haake were roundly abused, while such epithets as "Prussian swindlers," "Berlin niggards," "avaricious lick-spittles," and "tupenny-court" figured among the milder invectives which the infuriated hair-dresser hurled at the heads of royalty's representatives. However, in the end he was prevailed upon to settle on the basis of a hundred marks per month.

The original Ardeljana visits the Court at the beginning of each season to exhibit new styles, and, besides, is telegraphed for occasionally when great festivities or state functions require an elaborate toilet or the display of the Crown-jewels. He is a swarthy little man in the fifties, wearing a long beard, and, though claiming to be a German Catholic, is generally regarded as a Polish Jew. In his demeanor toward Her Majesty's ladies, the *Hoffriscur* is politeness itself, and the Kaiserin he treats with submissiveness verging on adulation, but woe to the male courtier who thwarts him. Ever since *Herr* von Mirbach fed Ardeljana two evenings in succession on pigs' feet and potato-salad,—“if he refuses to eat his supper, there can be no doubt of his Hebrew origin; and if he eats it, why, he is a renegade Jew,” calculated the Court-marshal,—ever since this assault upon his digestion and his faith as well, Ardeljana has nursed a quiet hatred of goldsticks, and at the slightest provocation pounces upon them with such surprising alacrity that our poor slow-coaches, who always want a day to catch their breaths, are invariably routed. Having the Kaiserin's ear for three or four hours at a time,

it is easy for the *friseur* to worst his adversaries while peacefully demonstrating upon Her Majesty's head the latest devices in hair-dressing; for, although Frau von Haake or one of Her Majesty's ladies-in-waiting and a chamber-woman are present, the one for etiquette's sake, the other to see how the thing is done so that she may be able to do it herself after Ardeljana's departure, the smart *Wiener* does all the talking. The fact is, even an Empress gets dreadfully tired of the monotonous humdrum of seeing the same faces about her, and listening to the same people, chewing the self-same cud, and, limited as the Kaiserin's interests are, she craves a change of subject once in a while. And, besides, Ardeljana is such an entertaining gossip: he knows all about the carryings on of the great Austrian aristocracy and the Court in particular. That account of his, dealing with the death of the Crown Prince Rudolph, which is said to come from the highest authority and which the *coiffure*-artist narrates with fine emotion, really deserves better than mere evanescent publication between four walls and to women that seldom, if ever, leave the gilded cage where royalty dwells. I will here set it down in Ardeljana's own language.

"In the circles his late Imperial Highness frequented," the *friseur* used to say while building up a *toupée* or chasing a blonde lock with dexterous fingers, "the prevailing wickedness is horrible to contemplate, if Your Majesty will permit me to say so. The men are vicious and the women—I beg pardon most submissively—are worse. When they indulge in their occasional revels"—here Ardeljana always pauses, as if expecting to be silenced by a word or look, but all, the Empress included, are far too eager to listen to be shocked,—“at these revels a beautiful mistress is sometimes forced to appear before the company like a classical statue and to submit to her lover's caresses before everybody.



Crown Prince Rudolph—I entreat Your Majesty and the ladies present not to suspect me of a desire to desecrate the late Prince's memory—had arranged a feast of that kind at Meyerling with several boon companions, and when the beautiful Baroness Vecsra refused to disrobe, her lover, drunk with wine and passion, pulled out a revolver and shot her. Then (it was regicide most horrible!),” and poor Ardeljana's voice became almost inaudible under the stress of loyal emotion, “the army officers, who had witnessed the scene, drew their sabres and in their anger and indignation cut our Prince Imperial to pieces. That was the reason why no one was allowed to see the illustrious dead.”

While the above speaks well for Ardeljana's information on topics of high life, his anecdotes of the Crown Princess Stephanie and the Princess Philip of Coburg prove entertaining to a degree. We learn from him that Stephanie's money troubles are a source of unceasing annoyance to herself and the imperial family; her income, sadly reduced in consequence of the late Rudolph's debts, scarcely suffices to keep up a Court. “Instead of discharging her obligations to society in the usual fashion,” says the Queen's chronicler, “she surrounds herself with squads of green officers and aristocratic striplings that have nothing but their youth to recommend them—neither brains, nor reputation, nor even wealth.” The Princess Coburg—but her escapades have, by this time, become common property, and I have referred already to Her Majesty's dislike for that woman, and how, for a time at least, it was dispelled.

After arresting the Kaiserin's interest by small talk on topics of the day, it is, of course, easy for the cunning *friseur* to put in a word or two for himself, and right here is his opportunity to get even with his official tormentors. They fed him on pork, and he obtained royal leave to select his own menus; they lodged him in the servants'

quarters, and the Empress ordered that an apartment in a first-class hotel be hired for him, etc. At the same time it must be admitted that Ardeljana is past-master of his trade.

It is a real pleasure to see this man handle the variegated contents of his many boxes of *chignons*, *toupées*, semi-wigs, braids, and locks of hair, all of the Empress's color, and see him try them successfully either on the Empress's head or on a wax figure bearing a striking likeness to her, so nimble and delicate, so full of artistic enthusiasm is his work, while the Kaiserin, on her part, never seems to grow weary of these exhibitions, though her poor head be buffeted and pawed over and stuck with pins and loaded with flowers and feathers and jewels whole mornings at a time.

The fashions finally adopted as the most becoming are taught to the chamber-women by demonstrations on the figure-head, and Ardeljana never departs until the maids are thoroughly perfect in all the styles.

As might be imagined, the cost of employing the great Vienna *coiffeur* is equal to a captain's pay. There are his fare and his time, and, last but not least, his styles are to be paid for,—“ideas,” as he calls them, calculated out in the seclusion of the study and original in every respect. All his inventions that please Her Majesty are acquired solely for her use, though, of course, they cannot be patented like the cut of a heel, or a shoe-string fastener. Indeed, the Empress *wants* them copied, and as quickly as it is done starts another of Ardeljana's styles, thus doing her share toward living up to the promises the Emperor made after assuming the government, viz.: that Berlin, henceforth, shall dictate the world's fashions, as Paris did under Napoleon and Eugénie. A great stretch this, from limpid, lively, fascinating Paris to the staid, heavy, *doctrinaire* German capital; but, to use another of William's phrases, “the King's will is the highest law,” and every

one does as well as personal efforts permit. And, from this point of view, the Kaiserin's many extravagances in the line of dress are scarcely so unreasonable as some Berlin gossips would have us believe, for Her Majesty's example induces society to follow suit, and home trade is benefited, though most of the models are bought in foreign lands.

If they were not, where should they come from? I asked this question of a Berlin shop-keeper who was pouring his complaints of the Empress's infatuation for foreign goods into my ear, at the same time petitioning me to suggest a change, for this man, like many of his kind, adheres to the belief that a *Hofdame* needs but throw out a hint in her mistress's presence to have it at once adopted and carried out. "We are quite as proficient as creators as any Frenchmen or Viennese," he asserted hotly.

There is the rub! These Berliners think all the world must conform to native taste; but, surely, every woman of fashion will side with Her Majesty's policy, that lays all the world under contribution for models and selects therefrom.

There is, however, this much to be said in favor of the Berliners. They are good imitators. Look at the Berlin hats of 1897-1898, and the monstrous things put up for sale before her *chic* Highness of Coburg became imperial bonnet purveyor by proxy! And think of the many thousand hands Her Majesty's liking for braided goods has kept busy since 1890! Though Berliners claim to be the creators of that particular style, I can vouch for the fact that the Kaiserin first noticed it in the model of a jacket imported from Paris. "That kind of work," she said at the time, "ought to be well done in Germany, where labor requiring patience and minute application is sought for." Orders for a number of braided garments were forthwith given to a Berlin house, and by this act the fashion was

established which, in the course of years, conferred upon thousands of smart needle-women the blessing of abundant work.

This chapter on the Kaiserin's gowns and finery would certainly be incomplete without brief mention of the rules of Court mourning. There is a tradition that the tabooing of black dresses is a peculiarity of the Russian Court, founded upon some superstition connected with Romanoff history. That may be true or not, but a Prussian *Hofdame*, venturing into the imperial presence in a dark gown at a time when mourning has not been officially declared, would be turned back as uncereemoniously as might be any colleague of hers at the Winter Palace, and that in spite of the fact that black is very becoming to Her Majesty.

The sovereign lady never has less than fifty to sixty mourning outfits ready, that number comprising all the different degrees, from deep to complimentary and memorial mourning, the latter being worn on the anniversaries of the deaths of near relatives.

Yet there are distinctions even in deep mourning. For instance: after the death of old Emperor William, which was certainly the most painful loss that could befall the Prince Imperial and his consort, the Crown Princess wore black woollen dresses trimmed with crape, and a veil which reached to the hem of her skirt, enveloping the entire figure; but when the demise of Frederick III had made her Empress, her gowns for the house, as well as for public occasions, were made entirely of crape, and on her head she wore, from morn to night, a black cap with trailing veil. This costume seemed all the harder to endure, as Her Majesty was then expecting her fifth child, and when I made my first official bow to her, in the garden of the Marble Palace, a few days after my installation, I could not refrain from suggesting a change, considering the hot

weather and her condition. But the Empress would not hear of it. "I owe this little inconvenience to my exalted station," she said, "and my dress is in strict accordance with etiquette."

Long Danish gloves of dull black go with this costume, as with every other degree of Court mourning save the slightest, while woollen dresses without crape, and finally black silk and damask gowns, succeed the sombre garment of the initial stages of deep mourning. As an intermediary from mourning to every-day costumes the Kaiserin wears black velvet, a material that used to set off her figure, when it was yet in its prime, to even greater perfection than the preceding silks and damasks, all these costumes being richly trimmed with jets and laces.

## CHAPTER VII

On November 1, 1892, the riding-school of the Berlin *Marshall* (royal stables) was gay with the women of the Court and society. His Majesty proposed to make this year's Hubertus hunt the event of the season, and all were going to help him do it. Hence the preparations. Some of us had to become used to fresh horses, others were obliged to learn anew the intricacies of the various bugle-calls. Quite unexpectedly the Hereditary Princess of Meiningen walked in with her lady-in-waiting, Baroness Ramin. I saw at once that Her Royal Highness had indulged in a lively breakfast, as they say in Berlin, for her face was flushed, and she addressed pleasantries to everybody, and even promised to ride *à la* Florence Dixey if somebody would lend her a pair of breeches.

"Nonsense!" cried the Princess of Hohenzollern, *née* Princess Bourbon. "Lottchen is bragging, I assure you, ladies; you all know that she wears the trousers. What more does she want?"

"The real article, cousin, the r-e-a-l article," retorted Lottchen, adding, with a shrug of the shoulders: "what suffices for the *ménage* will not do at all for the *manège*, especially when such puritan critics as Countess Brockdorff are about."

Then turning to *Mademoiselle* von Ramin, she said, loud enough for everybody in the ring to hear: "Now I will

show you how my sweet sister-in-law" (meaning the Empress) "mounts."

She had her horse brought round to a platform reached by three steps, and, ascending laboriously, raised herself on tiptoe and let herself fall into the saddle with a thud that caused the horse to stagger.

"Just like a majestic sack of flour, is it not?" she cried. "The more pity for the beast." Then she rode off, urging the chestnut to all sorts of caprioles and fancy steps.

Princess Therese was at Her Royal Highness's side like a flash, and as they cantered about, each trying to outdo the other in feats of daring, both laughed boisterously.

But if courtiers have long ears, Nemesis has legs of corresponding calibre. Indeed, in this case the dread goddess must have worn seven-league boots, for twelve hours after the impertinent words had fallen from privileged lips all who had been at the *Marstall* were quietly informed that ladies were not wanted at the forthcoming outing,—neither *Hofdamen*, nor Princesses of the blood royal! It being the first time that the Meiningen, Hohenzollern, and Hohenau coterie were turned down publicly, so to speak, the sensation in polite circles was tremendous, and while few quarrelled with Princess Charlotte for what she had said, all agreed that the Empress was right in asserting her position as vigorously as she had done.

Next day it was my good fortune to attend Her Majesty at Schloss Stern, the starting-point of the Hubertus hunt in Grunewald, and I must say her appearance was quite the reverse of the picture drawn by the Princess of Meiningen. Was it the English hunting-costume that proved so very becoming to the sovereign lady, or was it the presence of the Emperor in his red coat and silk hat, or the recollection of the victory just won? Auguste Victoria looked fresh and rosy and resplendent as she galloped over the

frozen ground, herself and Countess von Bassewitz being the only ladies in the "field."

Of course, the whole hunt was arranged with a view to fatigue their Majesties as little as possible, and, accordingly, the boar was set free at a point where he could be brought to bay within a quarter of an hour after the start, a programme carried out with surprising promptness and despatch this time. I say this time, for the reader must not run away with the idea that in our sphere promises are always kept or commands always obeyed. As a matter of record, royalty employs in its army of retainers scores of laggards, and while I admit that all-highest personages boast no special virtues entitling them to a higher standard of ethics than Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown can lay claim to, I must not disguise the fact that they are subject to the same routine of annoyances as yourself and neighbors.

I remember that on the occasion of a visit to the Neues Palais by the late William Walter Phelps, who was American Minister in Berlin in the early nineties, Her Majesty offered to show the baby to this amiable gentleman, and, being on duty, I was requested to fetch the child.

"May it please Your Majesty," I said, bowing low, "unless I am very much mistaken, the Prince drove out with his nurse a couple of minutes ago."

"That is impossible, Countess," said the Kaiserin. "I distinctly told Mrs. Matcham she must not venture to leave before lunch."

To make sure, I repaired to the nursery, where I found that my surmise was correct.

"But why did nurse disobey my instructions?" exclaimed Her Majesty, when I returned without the child.

"Begging Your Majesty's pardon, she told Countess Brockdorff she knew herself when it was best to take out the youngster."



I had naturally hesitated to make this blunt report; but the Kaiserin took the English woman's impudence good-naturedly, and turning to Mr. Phelps, with a smile, said: "You perceive, Mr. Minister, we are all in the same boat with respect to servants. They are the real masters of every household. If you want to see that baby, I shall have to temporize with Mrs. Matcham."

To return to our subject, the master of the hunt does not always show so lucky a hand as on the occasion described. The very next year, in 1894, Mr. Boar gave his keepers the slip too soon, and, having gained nearly four minutes' time over the hounds, led them a merry chase through Grunewald toward Spandau, their Majesties following with the well-peopled "field,"—that is to say, the latter kept together during the first mile or two, but, later, redcoats began to drop out, until at the *Ha-la-lit* ("there goes") scarcely a baker's dozen reported, among them, on his high English hunter, the Emperor, very proud of his achievement, but also (this was a matter of common report at Court) not a little vexed over the *faux pas* that turned the customary royal pig-trot into something resembling a real, live fox-race.

Kaiser Wilhelm felt, I suppose, that for him to engage in such violent exercise was tempting fate, considering that, while his right arm only is of practical use in the management of the horse, exceptional care must be exercised for the protection of the other,—not an easy undertaking while galloping among trees and through thickets. An overhanging branch, or refractory behavior on the part of the mount, may be attended by the gravest consequences.

The Empress, so Countess von Bassewitz told us in the evening, made the gentlemen wait quite a long while before she hove in sight, escorted by her *Kammerherr* von der Knesebeck, which latter was loud in denunciations of

Her Majesty's horse, which, he cried, lost his wind after the first quarter of an hour.

Exciting as the hunt had been for their Majesties, both Kaiser and Kaiserin missed the best part of the fun. That, as usual when Her Royal Highness is around, followed in the wake of Therese Trani, the spouse of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern.

Madame Therese, a daughter of Louis *des Deux Siciles*, is the life of every party, whether she visits the petty Court of Sigmaringen and, by her frivolities, causes her royal mother-in-law, a Princess of Portugal, to squirm, or interpolates her speech with *risqué* German phrases, affecting not to understand the meaning of the words; whether she takes pot-luck in the mess-room of some Potsdam regiment, or encourages her husband's young comrades to drag her along the lawn by her feet in imitation of a practice introduced by a famous ancestress, the *Dauphine*, Duchess of Burgundy (this latter sport is sometimes carried on in the garden of their Highnesses' villa in Augusta Strasse, Potsdam); whether she comes to Court and maddens "Dona" by coquetting with the Emperor, or entertains her neighbors at a state dinner with an account of her first confinement, which unexpectedly occurred at a one-horse Mecklenburg watering-place, while her *accouchée* was in Berlin and the *layette*, ordered from England, was in the keeping of the custom house; whether she dances, plays cards, smokes cigarettes, or attends a "churching,"—there is always something to remember of one's meeting with this lively young woman. They say her brother-in-law, Karl Anton of Hohenzollern, had to leave Potsdam by night and in a fog (in 1890), the Kaiser having granted him a six-weeks' furlough in order that the Hereditary Prince's just wrath might have time to cool. Afterward, they say, lovesick Karl Anton was sent into exile at Cassel. They also say

Karl Anton married Josephine of Flanders, an unhappy creature hardly able to speak a sentence connectedly (her articulation is so faulty that not one out of a hundred persons is able to understand her),—they say Karl Anton married Josephine in order to obtain leave to return to Potsdam and occasionally catch a glimpse of jolly Therese, but it is just as likely that the pair joined hands in order to “keep the money in the family” (there are no end of *on dits*), yet Her Royal Highness is certainly the last person to care. And her husband? He exhibited some fine passion, when at last he found out that he was being cuckolded by the gay *Uhlán*, but has since settled down to a philosophical sort of life. The Princess he put in charge of Colonel von Bachmayer, his Court-marshal, an elderly gentleman of good manners and great energy, who follows Her Royal Highness wherever she goes and keeps her out of trouble to the best of his ability.

*Herr* von Bachmayer rode in Madame Therese’s train, too, after that obstinate pig, but he was not alone. Far from it. There were, besides Karl Anton, a host of cavalrymen and sports.

Her Royal Highness had the best horse, and a start of fifty paces. “Heigh-ho!” “*Houp-là!*” “*Ventre à terre!*”—she was bound to get to Spandau before their Majesties had passed Hundekehlensee, if she kept it up. Her horse did, but not Her Royal Highness.

When Therese was urging her steed through a clump of trees with overhanging branches, the tragedy of the forest of Ephraim was certainly most foreign to her mind. But history repeats itself. Her Royal Highness’s skirt caught in the branches as did Absalom’s hair, and she was left suspended, while her long-legged hunter pressed on. The men witnessed the bloodless accident with delighted wonderment, but before they could reach the unhappy King’s

daughter, she was on her hands and knees, and a wide rent in the seat of her trousers showed where her tailor had skimped the cloth. The skirt was still hanging overhead.

Now a dozen cavaliers drew rein and dismounting assisted Therese to her feet. She struggled. "*Non, non*; don't you see I *must* sit down?"

"No," said Herr von Bachmayer, in tones of authority, "Your Royal Highness will stand with your back to the tree, while we will rearrange your skirt in front."

Sound advice this, and it was quickly followed.

"Now will Your Royal Highness gaze at the tree for a while?" suggested the Colonel.

"*Oh, ich habe so Scham!*" ("I am so ashamed!"), faltered the Princess, between giggles.

"All unmarried men turn about face!" cried Herr von Bachmayer. Ours is a well-disciplined army, and the young men obeyed, while Princess Therese turned around, and, standing in the attitude of the Venus de Medici, allowed Karl Anton to draw enough hair-pins from her head to fasten what was left of the skirt onto her waist. Meanwhile, one of the reserve horses had been fetched and the merry crowd started off again. In the evening, Her Royal Highness returned home in a coupé, secured at Spandau. The story, with all details, as above related, is her own. She told it to her chum, Charlotte of Meiningen, adding, with a silvery laugh: "As I heard all those men galloping up to where I was lying, I was reminded of the question the nuns of Brabant put to General Dumouriez" (who commanded the invading French army in 1792): "*Quand est-ce, que nous serons violées?*"

Herr von der Kneesebeck's criticism of the royal hunter that failed was not a mere excuse, as might be surmised; all Her Majesty's horses are selected more with reference to handsome appearance and strength than to juvenile

fire. Indeed, Auguste Victoria seldom rides one under the age of ten to twelve years, although, as a general rule, a decade is the age-limit for animals in the Kaiser's stables. Moreover, her horses are so perfectly trained and of such lamb-like disposition that, to quote once more the Princess of Meiningen, "they will not wink an eye or move an ear except on most gracious, all-highest command." Her Royal Highness's bit of comedy, depicting the Kaiserin in the act of mounting, is likewise founded on fact: a portable platform is kept in all the royal stables and parks.

I have frequently attended Her Majesty on horseback, alternating with *Fräulein* von Gersdorff and Countess Bassewitz in this pleasant duty, our cavalcade including, besides one of the chamberlains, the saddle-master and one or two grooms, but it always looked to me as if Her Majesty was not fond of the sport. I think she practises riding merely to be in the fashion, to exhibit her courage, and because she has an idea that she looks well *à la* Amazon,—fallacies all of them. An Empress should command the mode, instead of submitting to it; fortitude, she might argue, is but a matter of temperament, or apprenticeship, if it comes high; as for cutting a dashing appearance, that depends entirely upon circumstances.

We have seen Her Majesty radiant with good-nature and looking exceedingly well in her festive dress as she rode out from Castle Stern, but her every-day habit, a black costume and silk hat, is not at all becoming. And in uniform she looks a perfect fright, not on account of the dress so much as because of her cocked chapeau, which replaces the cuirassiers' steel cap. It is large, of white felt, brim pinned thrice up, the crown bent in and trimmed with white ostrich-tips; in front an *aigrette* of brilliants stands out, "fine feathers" all; but the combination is entirely unsuitable to the imperial lady who, to make

matters worse, is obliged to add a tulle veil to shield her weak eyes from the sun.

If she only knew how that *Dreimaster* spoils her appearance! but, needless to say, no one dares so much as to breathe an objection. And, considering all, it would be the height of folly to do so, and risk, perhaps, a whole season of royal displeasure, as I myself might have found out to my sorrow, had I followed my impulse and persisted in telling unwelcome truths when, in June, 1895, Her Majesty was about to attend the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Hohenfriedberg, of which more in a later chapter.

"I have a good mind to advise the Kaiserin to get a new head-covering for the parade," I said to *Herr* von Mirbach a week or ten days before the event came off.

"It would be a gracious thing, no doubt," answered he; "but let Your Ladyship be warned that it is dangerous to mention before the all-highest ears facts that have the sting of possible offence in them. Ask the Princess of Meiningen's *Hofdame* for particulars, if you will not take my word for it."

Charlotte of Meiningen being the only person at Court that speaks her mind about everybody and everything to everybody, I was naturally anxious to ascertain in what way her passion for candid observations got her into trouble.

Ramin at first hesitated to take me into the secret, but after a while relented, and told me what follows.

At the beginning of the last carnival season, Princess "Lottchen" wrote a humorous note to her imperial brother, advising him not to wear the red gala dress he is so fond of sporting at the balls, as it was not at all becoming to his style of beauty.

In answer, William sent an extract from a Russian historical work, G. P. Danilevski's "Princess Tarakanova," which, he said, he was just then reading.

"My mistress," continued the *Hofdame*, "thought at first His Majesty merely desired to impress upon her that he, of all Princes, had succeeded in mastering the difficult Muscovite tongue, but observing at the end of the sheet the sentence: 'What a pity summary punishment is out of date,' twice underlined, she became anxious to read the whole.

"Here is a copy of the translation sent to Her Royal Highness," said *Mademoiselle* von Ramin, taking some closely-written pages of note-paper from her *secrétaire*. "Listen," and she read aloud:

"'Marie Dimitrievna was the wife of one of Catherine the Second's much-valued officers, Major-General Kojin. She was lively, beautiful, and a veritable chatterbox, telling all the world all she knew, or imagined she knew, together with careless comment upon people's behavior. No one was safe from her tattle, no one, not even the Empress. Once she took it into her pretty head to speak of Her Majesty's relations to Potemkin with a freedom altogether out of place in Russia. The Empress heard of it, and forthwith issued an order to a stalwart member of the Secret Police, who, at the same time, held a high post at Court.

"'At ten o'clock to-night,' so read Catherine's *lettre de cachet*, 'go to the masked *redoute* held at the mansion of General Kojin. Seek out the *Generalsha*, and, without letting either her guests or her husband or servants know what is going on, place her in your carriage and bring her to the Secret Department. In one of the inner rooms have the lady stripped and give her a taste of corporal punishment as a warning against the folly of babbling and of criticising personages who must be held above gossip. Having soundly whipped Marie Dimitrievna, return her to her friends, after commanding, in my name, that she fulfil all her engagements with the dancers and never breathe a word about the incident, lest it be repeated at an early opportunity.'

"This programme was religiously carried out, and the *Generalsha* never talked about it or criticised anybody in future."

Here the Kaiser's translation broke off, and the words of regret, above referred to, were inserted in large, impressive letters.

Riding and walking are the only bodily exercises my mistress indulges in, aside from dancing once or twice a year at a certain private ball held at their Majesties' apartments in Berlin. These *soirées dansantes* must not be confounded with the great Court balls in the White Hall, when all is state and pomp and *ennui*, and the Emperor and Empress leave the throne only once during the whole course of the evening to say a few official nothings to some Minister, Ambassador, or other dignitary. The annual dancing-parties are held in the *Pfeilersaal*, once the *salle d'armes* of Frederick the Great, where his body-guard used to hold forth. The lofty parlor now affords communication between both Majesties' private chambers, one end of it opening into the Empress's *salon*, where Watteau's celebrated painting, "The Embarkment for Cythera," delights the eye.

A few days before our private ball in the winter of 1893, my mistress told me she was going to trip the light fantastic in accordance with the Emperor's wishes. "I will therefore trouble you to examine the barrier of living plants, hiding the musicians, most carefully," she continued, "for I do not want those men to see me. There should be no loop-holes, and if you find it necessary to have a screen behind the shrubbery, order one by all means."

I suggested that a screen might spoil the airy decorative effect.

"Maybe," replied the Kaiserin, "and then the Emperor would be displeased. Well, you must make the plants do, but have them so placed as to form an impenetrable wall."

"I beg Your Majesty's pardon," I made bold to remark, "Court history has it that your great ancestress, Queen Louise, was not only passionately fond of dancing, but was imbued by the ambition to dance in public. According to reliable chroniclers, she went through many a minuet at the



Opera House yonder, while thousands of her royal subjects looked on and applauded her efforts."

"Yes, yes, the Kaiser rehearsed these events many times, and Queen Louise's example encourages me as much as anything to take up the practice," mused Her Majesty, adding, with spirit: "but all that notwithstanding, I cannot bear the idea of gyrating round under the vulgar eye of hired attendants and servants. And another thing, Countess, when you hear me order the Court-marshal to fetch a dancer, please see to it that the doors leading into the adjoining apartments are closed, the lackeys remaining on the outside. I will not take a step until told, by a motion of your head, that all is attended to."

These all-highest wishes were carried out at the *soirée* in every particular, and at the close of the entertainment I no longer wondered at the purport of it all. Dancing, I fancy, is a natural gift capable of improvement; its different steps may be laboriously acquired, may even become a matter of memorizing, but unless there be talent at the bottom of it, the performance will certainly prove lame and devoid of grace.

Auguste Victoria was endowed with virtues more sturdy than nimble, and dancing is entirely out of her line; I dare say she feels it herself, though pride would no more allow her to admit this than her want of efficiency as an *equestrienne*, her pretensions being the outcome of the divine-appointment illusion, in which the Hohenzollerns believe as earnestly and which they accept as unreservedly as did any Shah or Grand Turk of the eighteenth century.

"By the Grace of God!"—these five, short words cover a vaster volume of sins against good sense than even charity! Here we have a sovereign lady who in all respects lives up to her representative duties as the consort of a powerful monarch, a woman of fine carriage

and fully conscious of her limitations in reference to affairs of state, yet imbued to such an extent with the notion that no one has a right to surpass her in feminine accomplishments as to let this fancy degenerate into a fixed idea. That she aims to be the smartest dresser, the most dignified and most gracious Queen, the most earnest worker in the cause of the Lutheran Church, are ambitions to be commended, but why also the best rider, the best dancer?

And the ludicrous part of it is, these august personages never dream that their affectations are transparent to the people about them. Thus I was told by the Emperor's Adjutant, Count Moltke, that when, on the occasion of a family excursion on horseback, he pointed out Prince William, praising him for his steady seat, Her Majesty said: "Ah, he inherited his horsemanship from me," a remark which caused the Emperor to sniff with impatience. Still, the truth of their mere humanness is often enough brought home to Kings and Queens.

Here are a couple of anecdotes to the point, both dating from Hubertusstock, whither their Majesties retire occasionally, attended by a small retinue consisting of two adjutants, a Court-marshal, lady-in-waiting, *Kammerherr*, and (this is the height of economy according to Court usages) one body-physician for both husband and wife.

In October, 1890, the Kaiserin accompanied the Emperor to an evening's rut-of-hart-shooting in a certain section of the forest, where the imperial Nimrod was so certain of making a big haul that he promised victims of his rifle on all sides.

The pair drove off with high expectations, the Kaiser in his new "hunt uniform," the Kaiserin wearing a gown of white cloth, silver-braided. But though conditions

seemed favorable—moon discreetly hidden behind clouds, wind blowing out of eminently correct quarters—some strange agency managed to frighten the stags away and out of reach as often as a fine pair of antlers came before William's barrel. The Kaiser allowed himself to be fooled in this fashion three long hours, until, finally, losing patience, he ordered the horses brought around. Getting into the carriage, he noticed an old gamekeeper, who stared at the Kaiserin in a rather disrespectful manner. "What is it, my man?" inquired the Emperor, who was beginning to suspect the cause of his ill-luck; "perhaps *you* can tell us why no confounded deer would come within range this evening."

"To be sure, Majesty" (the common folk of Germany always omit the "your"), "plain as daylight, that. Any fool knows that animals are skeered of white clothes."

The remark was so apropos that the Emperor overlooked its rudeness, and, turning to his wife with a mock bow, he exclaimed: "*Da hast Du die Proste-Mahlzeit*" ("That settles your bacon"), "'Dona.' In future I shall know better than to take a fashion-plate hunting with me."

The disgruntled couple arrived at the chalet after midnight, and I heard the Kaiser say he would take supper alone, meaning in company with his gentlemen only. Whether the Empress knew of this intention, I am unable to tell, but I do know that Her Majesty was in a fearful temper during our solitary meal in the boudoir, though the cook had provided her *mets favori*: potatoes in their jackets, and cold pork. Everything and everybody was in the wrong, and even the beloved Haake came in for her share of scolding.

"I forgot all about it, and, of course, none of my ladies knew enough to remind me that I possess not one garment fit for the chase." With these words the Kaiserin

wound up a long series of complaints, adding: "Let Lampe be commanded by telegraph to get up a full-skirted hunting-costume of the usual material, with green velvet trimmings, within forty-eight hours."

"But His Majesty being so particular as to color," I ventured to suggest, for the gamekeeper's blunt talk was already known at the castle, "would it not be better to send a sample of cloth to Frankfurt?"

"A good idea," cried our mistress, her face lighting up. "I tell you what you can do, Countess. After His Majesty has retired, get the valet to cut a sample from one of the turnings of his suit and enclose that to Lampe, sending a *Feldjäger* to the railway station with the letter. And be sure to use an envelope with the imprint: 'On His Majesty's Service.' That will carry it through by noon to-morrow."

The sample was secured in the manner directed. Lampe proved equal to the occasion, and Her Majesty's seasonable equipment arrived by the end of the week, giving such satisfaction that ever since it has formed an important part of the Empress's outing wardrobe. The costume is of greenish-gray material, tailor-made, with buttons cut from antlers. With it a small, round, green felt hat, adorned by a tuft of woodcock feathers and a simple green silk cord, is worn, while a tiny *couteau de chasse* hangs from Her Majesty's belt.

Another occasion where the purple-born was forcefully reminded of the equality of all things human arose during Court mourning for the late King of Württemberg, who died October 6, 1891. To escape tedious ceremonies in honor of that royal reprobate, their Majesties repaired to Hubertusstock shortly after the obsequies in Stuttgart, taking with them even less of a retinue than is customary at this retreat; and as the Kaiser hunted all day, there

was absolutely no one for whom she cared to dress up. Her Majesty seized the opportunity to wear some of her oldest mourning-dresses, and thus started out one morning in a simple gown devoid of all ornamentation, and wearing a Berlin hat to boot.

The royal lady intended to take a stroll in the forest all by herself, but, of course, no Queen is ever permitted to do so, her commands or entreaties notwithstanding; so I went ahead, while a lackey followed Her Majesty at a respectful distance.

The Empress had not been out more than a quarter of an hour when she met the letter-carrier, an old man whose leather bag is filled only on very rare occasions—at Christmas and during the Kaiser's occupancy of the castle. As it is a notorious fact that old Friedrich's head swells in proportion to the quantity of mail he handles, I felt some slight apprehension of impending trouble when I observed Her Majesty approach this pompous landlubber-martinet.

"Have you letters for Majesty?" asked the Kaiserin, imitating the vulgar mode of referring to the King.

"That way a fool may get caught, my girl," bristled up the veteran, "not a man like *me*" (he struck his breast so that the bronze medals decorating it began to dance about), "and, besides," he continued, with a leer in his eye, "those black gloves of yours might dirty the beautiful Kaiser-letters."

"Oh, my husband won't mind that; give me the letters."

"Your husband? Have a care, you dressed-up wench,—for you don't look smart enough for a *Köchin*" (cook),—"lest I report you for insult to Majesty."

At this juncture I thought it high time to make my presence known, and as the *Leibjäger*, too, arrived on the scene, the zealous postman quickly collapsed, and,

throwing himself on his knees, begged the sovereign lady's pardon. Of course, it was granted; it would have been ridiculous to take the old fool seriously. By Her Majesty's command, I gave him a mark that he might drown his terror in a bottle of *Schnapps*.



## CHAPTER VIII

Only quite recently have rumors of Her Majesty's ill-health crept into print, but the sovereign lady has been a sick woman since her *fausse couche* in June, 1895.

The Kaiserin was four months *enceinte* when the *Hohenfriedberg Tag*, that is, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Hohenfriedberg (June 4, 1745), was first spoken of. It was her "own" regiment that won the famous victory, the "Baireuth Dragoons," now the Queen's Cuirassiers, or Pasewalker Cuirassiers, and Her Majesty at once decided to be the central figure of the festivities.

Grand Master of Ceremony Baron von Mirbach, advised of our august mistress's wish, set the ball rolling. First of all, Lieutenant-Colonel von Nymphenheim, commander of the regiment, was notified. An hour after receiving the message he was on his way to Potsdam, carrying an "all-submissive" petition from the regiment, which begged its most illustrious chief to confer upon the officers and troopers the "all-gracious" favor of attending the Pasewalk day of honor. Next there arrived for the Empress a high-stepping saddle-horse, sent by the director of the Trakehnen stud, and warranted "to be as docile as the proverbial lamb."

"You will have to ask one of your ladies to ride the chestnut for you during the summer," remarked the Kaiser at breakfast the morning after the blooded stallion had been received.



The Empress, who hates to have any one use anything belonging to her, replied, with a frown: "But I have not yet given up horseback exercise. Indeed, I thought of accompanying you to-day on a canter to Babelsberg, and gave orders that the new *Trakehner* be saddled."

The Emperor looked annoyed; but he detests scenes as much as any man, so he merely nodded assent. An hour later, the imperial couple was on the road to Babelsberg. The new horse proved all the director had claimed for him: he was beautiful, obedient to the slightest touch of the rein, and afraid of nothing. When their Majesties returned a few hours later, Auguste Victoria acted with unusual spirit. She danced about with the children, played billiards so badly as to let William beat her time and again, and, to cap the climax, appeared at luncheon in an extremely low-cut gown.

And what a jolly meal they had,—Kaiser, Kaiserin, and Lieutenant-Colonel von Nymphenheim! When the latter, taking leave late in the afternoon, bent low over the Empress's hand, he was heard to say: "*Au revoir, mon Générale, au revoir* in Pasewalk."

Grand-mistress Countess Brockdorff was dumfounded by the news. "Your Majesty will never be able to wear a tight uniform in June; remember, it will be your fifth month. I cannot permit it."

As she spoke, Her Excellency raised the *lorgnon* and looked her haughtiest. She is an imperious dame. Though having officially no voice in the household affairs that she makes her own, the Countess presumes to dictate to the Empress, as well as to terrorize the entire *entourage*. She is a fine-looking old woman, with an interesting head and a grand carriage. She has education and *esprit*, accomplishments in which Her Majesty is sadly lacking, but unfortunately uses them as a club to browbeat poor Auguste Victoria.

I have often trembled when I heard this woman address insolent or venomous remarks to our mistress,—trembled with a desire to throw the invectives back into her teeth. Even when submitting a proposition, she does it in arrogant tones. If the Empress mentions a watering-place where she wants to spend the summer with her children, and Countess Brockdorff does not approve of the choice, she runs the place down, though knowing, perhaps, nothing about its attractions or disadvantages. So there is often nothing left for Her Majesty but to pass the season at Wilhelmshöhe, which she loathes, as the park and gardens of King Jerome's old residence are subject to the glare of thousands of opera-glasses from morning till night.

Auguste Victoria is not an angel, but would be far less of a trial if it were not for the influence of the grand-mistress, who keeps her in a state of perpetual irritation, indulges her petulance, and forever dissuades her from any generous notions that may enter her head. I once heard the Empress Frederick say: "If my daughter-in-law never saw her *Oberhofmeisterin* except in her *mantilla*, things would run much smoother at the Neues Palais."

The *mantilla*, a black lace shawl fastened to the back of the head and falling over the shoulders, is the grand-mistress's insignia, and is worn on public occasions, at audiences, state festivals, grand dinners, and similar functions which she is obliged to attend. Her further duties are to shield her mistress from coming into contact with persons unsuited to the royal presence, and to be her counsellor and friend generally; all other services she renders are gratuitous.

Under the Empresses Augusta and Frederick the *grandes mattresses* had establishments of their own; that, by itself, kept them from interfering in affairs of the Court. Her present Excellency, reckoning with the perennial low tide

in the exchequer, relinquished her claims for rent-moneys and asked to be lodged in the palace, and I need but mention that the Empress assigned to her the so-called Hohenzollern apartment, adjoining her own chambers in the Schloss—the same that was intended for the imperial children—to indicate Countess Brockdorff's influence. In the Neues Palais she has equally splendid chambers.

And to show her appreciation, this woman tyrannizes over the Kaiserin in such unprecedented fashion that our timid mistress is sometimes driven to a point when she thinks of complaining to the Emperor. "But what would be the consequence?" argues the sovereign lady. "The Kaiser detests Brockdorff, and would be glad to cashier her. Still, who knows whether her successor will be more agreeable?"

Only once did Auguste Victoria seriously contemplate the dismissal of Her Excellency; namely, when the latter dared to forbid her driving out with her children unattended. It happened in December, 1889, when the *Hoflager* was established at the Berlin Schloss. Brockdorff entered Her Majesty's rooms as the latter was about to descend.

"Myself and the children are going to pay a visit to our grandmother" (the Empress Augusta), said the Kaiserin.

"But I do not see Your Majesty's lady-in-waiting."

"I told *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff she might stay at home. It is only a few steps to the Palais."

"Surely, Your Majesty has no intention of going unattended?" The grand-mistress had assumed her tone of authority.

"And why not, pray?"

"Because it would be the first time that a German Empress, or a Queen of Prussia either, does such a thing."

The Kaiserin's blood was up. "The first or the last time, *this* German Empress does as she pleases." And

Her Majesty swept out of the room, leaving the Countess glued to the spot in open-mouthed astonishment.

A truce was patched up only after days of sulking on Auguste Victoria's part and after the Countess had thoroughly humbled herself.

However, "the pitcher goes to the well until it breaks." In the Pasewalk matter it was shattered to pieces, and at the wrong moment too. The grand-mistress had no sooner pronounced her *non imprimatur* respecting the affair, when Auguste Victoria flared up: "The Kaiser gave his consent, *Gräfin*, and I shall regard your interference as impertinent."

There was poor Joachim, stunted, dull, excitable, his life and reason hanging by a thread, staring her in the face; but this time the loving mother had no thought of the *Mene tekel*. Swayed by the desire to show her independence of the dogmatical *grande maîtresse*, and, incidentally, yearning for new honors in the army, Her Majesty refused to listen to reason. During the next two weeks she divided her time between military exercises, riding, and the trying on of uniforms. A new *Waffenrock*, with extra broad inside turnings, was ordered, so the waist measure might be increased, if necessary, and our evenings were spent listening to or talking over lectures on the history of the "Baireuth Dragoons." For it had been decided that Her Majesty was to make a speech at the state banquet. In her capacity as chief of the regiment, she desired to formally welcome the war-lord and, at the same time, review at length the record of her troopers. Now, if Auguste Victoria lacks any particular accomplishment, it is that of ready address. Besides suffering from a constitutional inability to pronounce certain consonants, her articulation is faulty and her speech generally indistinct. She lisps, and can enunciate "p," "v," and "r"

only by supreme effort; ordinarily. Her Majesty substitutes sounds which may pass for "b," "th," and "w" for these letters. Besides these physical, there are intellectual drawbacks. I have heard Her Majesty address the officers' wives of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion (at the annual commemoration festivities) two years in succession with the self-same words; namely: "I have all my children with me to-day," and once when, at the *Adler Schiessen* (shooting-match) of the First Guards, the crack-shots were presented to her, she announced, as if telling a great piece of news: "The Kaiser is in Russia, and I had to come alone with my children to this ceremony."

A really distressing scene of Her Majesty's helplessness I witnessed on January 17, 1889, the date of the annual coronation and decoration festival, the first held under William II.

A quarter of an hour before the beginning of the ceremonies, Chamberlain *Herr* von Ende and myself conducted Her Majesty to an apartment adjoining the state rooms, in order to present the honorary pages, who were to carry her train.

As may be imagined, the best-looking boys of noble birth in the kingdom had been selected for that office. There they stood, lithe, erect, blonde, and smiling in their graceful costumes of white satin, scarlet, silver, and laces.

"Cornet von Brauchitsch and Cornet *Freiherr* von Reibnitz," said the chamberlain.

The pages bowed low, and remained standing at an angle of forty-five degrees, as they had been told to unbend only when Her Majesty addressed them.

My mistress smiled, but said nothing.

"Cornet von Brauchitsch," commenced *Herr* von Ende again, "belongs to —," and a short history of the boy's family followed. Again Her Majesty smiled, but without

uttering a word. And "the Barons von Reibnitz," began the goldstick anew, and gave the Reibnitzes a splendid send-off. These reviews consumed five minutes at the very least; still Her Majesty kept silent.

"I submit that these are the pages who will have the honor to carry Your Majesty's train," I whispered.

*Enfin* the Empress understood that she had to do something. Nodding her head, she said quickly: "So you are going to carry my train!" The poor boys' heads shot up into the air, and, with faces as red as their coats, they stuttered: "At Your Imperial Majesty's orders," and again bowed low. Then, at a sign from *Herr* von Ende, they advanced to kiss the Kaiserin's hand, but Her Majesty, utterly confused, turned her back upon the boys, who now grasped hold of the loops of the *drap d'argent* mantle and followed the sovereign lady; for, contrary to all custom, the Empress led the way, and *Herr* von Ende succeeded in stepping before her only at the entrance to the next apartment.

And knowing Her Majesty's proneness to stage fright, *Herr* von Mirbach and Lieutenant-Colonel von Nymphenheim persuaded her to deliver an oration. Amid studies of all sorts—studies on military commands, on horsemanship, on bugle-calls, on expression and gesticulation—the day of days arrived. Two strong maids laced Her Majesty; it was cruel work to fasten her uniform.

I with others of the suite attended the review in a carriage, and you may imagine our feelings when we saw our mistress gambol about like a girl in the first bloom of youth with mind and body free from responsibilities. Barring intervals, Her Majesty galloped for a full hour that morning, and when, later on, I attended her at our temporary quarters, in the residence of Commander von Nymphenheim, who is a bachelor by the way, I thought a

miscarriage imminent. However, the pains subsided after a long rest, and a few strong doses of egg and cognac set my mistress right again.

The banquet lasted three hours,—three hours more the sovereign lady remained swathed in that grasp of iron, and during part of the time stood up, delivering her speech. First she trembled, and she lisped painfully all along, but nevertheless carried the oration to the point where it ended in the customary three "*hochs*" for the war-lord.

Baron von Mirbach tells a pretty story how the Empress composed that Pasewalk speech "all by herself," but, unfortunately, his tale is spoiled by the reflection that Auguste Victoria must have had the manuscript in hand these thirty or more years, for the tenor of her oration, so far as it dealt with Hohenfriedberg battle, ran somewhat in this fashion :

" Frederick had abolished the Saxons toward noon, and was pressing upon Prince Karl's " (the Austrian commander's) " naked left flank. At that moment, Lieutenant-General Gessler, under whom is the Dragoon Regiment Baireuth, dashed through, in two columns, sabre in hand, with extraordinary impetus and fire, into the belly of these jumbly Austrians, and slashed them to rags, twenty battalions of them, in an altogether unexampled manner. Took several thousand prisoners and such a haul of standards, kettle-drums, and insignia of honor as was never got before at one charge,—sixty-seven standards by the tale,—for the regiment wears, ever after, ' 67 ' upon its cartridge-box, and is allowed to beat the grenadier march."

A certain Thomas Carlyle published the above about 1861 or 1862, that is, at a period when Auguste Victoria was three years old.

We brought the Empress home in a precarious condition; she was thoroughly exhausted, unable to move a limb, and Dr. Zunker had little difficulty in persuading her that she must keep to her bed for an indefinite period.

However, ten days later she insisted upon getting up. A year before the Kaiser had promised that she should be the central figure (beside him) of the North Sea Canal opening, and she was not going to miss that. But while dressing to go to Hamburg, where, on July 19, the great banquet was to be held, our mistress collapsed, to rise again after three days. Then we all went to Kiel, taking lodgings at the Royal Schloss and attending some of the less fatiguing ceremonies, Her Majesty being escorted all the time by one of the body-physicians and stealthily keeping up her spirits by large doses of arsenic. Suddenly she took it into her head to go and live with the Kaiser on the yacht Hohenzollern. She endured the sea just twelve hours, then succumbed to the motion. The Empress had a miscarriage on deck, and was more dead than alive when she arrived at the Schloss. She now remained in bed four weeks. After that she was transported to the Neues Palais, was carried on a stretcher up-stairs and down-stairs, and to and from the carriage or car,—a confirmed invalid, as we feared. She did not get back the use of her limbs until the beginning of September.

But, although at the time Her Majesty's condition was a matter of general comment in the household, Grand-mistress Brockdorff wanted it understood that our mistress was merely suffering from a cold. Even the trained nurse, whom Professor Ohlshausen sent to watch that his instructions were faithfully carried out,—even this woman, who wore the customary nurse's dress and cap and slept in the Kaiserin's anteroom, figured as "seamstress" on the cooks' and the salary lists.

The Kiel *fausse couche* completed the wrecking of a constitution already impaired; but even before Her Majesty had begun to suffer from either her miscarriage or the drug-habit, she had impoverished her health by over-exertion.



After her first confinements, she used to keep in retirement five or six weeks, then the period was reduced to four, and, following Prince Joachim's birth, our sovereign lady persuaded the Emperor to return to the connubial couch after twenty days. Her love for William is pathetic. When he is away on his travels, she sleeps with his photograph on the pillow where his blonde head ought to rest, the full-length picture being stuck under the quilt up to the chin. When he is at home, she undergoes a thousand pains to make herself attractive according to his ever-varying notions. Because he experienced a sudden liking for slender women, my poor mistress sacrificed her bosoms, as already mentioned, and when the flesh-reducing process was fairly under way I found her in tears one morning. The Kaiser, she said amid sobs, had informed her "if he hated anything more than a fleshy woman, it was one as flat as a pancake."

Her Majesty frequently takes an hour to prepare for the night, only to find "Willie" snoring softly when she comes to bed. And, oh, the tears the imperial lady sheds over her hands which, though proportionate to her body, cannot be coaxed to come up to the Kaiser's standard of beauty. If those tears were collected, as was the saltish sympathy of paid weepers at the ancient Roman funerals, marry! they would fill quite as many bottles as are on Her Majesty's dresser.

I have had occasion to speak of Her Majesty's jealousy before this. When she is about to have a baby, that disposition becomes a perfect craze. When, in July, 1892, the *Hoflager* moved to the Marble Palace, where Princess Louise was born, the household had to get along without its official head, Baroness von Larisch, because the lady happens to have beautiful hands and arms and, on that account, is much admired by His Majesty. And a still

more petty thing: Auguste Victoria confiscated a photograph of Queen Emma of the Netherlands which stood on the Emperor's desk. The Queen-Regent is a most estimable lady, but it would be folly to call her pretty. Still, she has fine hands, and everybody and everything liable to inflame His Majesty's passion had to go. At about this time the Kaiserin ordered the seamstresses, who occupied a little room overlooking the court-yard, to be dislodged. She trembled lest her husband, who was about to return from his Northland journey, should see one of the women at the window.

If anything makes Her Majesty love little Louise more than her other children, it is the fact that the Emperor himself officiated at the babe's *accouchement*. That was quite an event even for so many-sided a personage as William, but, before describing it, I must call attention to the fact that, in obedience to Her Majesty's express commands, the lying-in chamber is selected only at the very last moment.

On September 13, at two o'clock in the morning, Her Majesty felt her hour had come. Still, she did not want to disturb the Emperor, who was sleeping at her side. After ringing the bell for Mrs. Macdonald, the English nurse, she crept out of bed and placed a screen so as to shield her husband from the eyes of persons entering the room. Mrs. Macdonald had been sitting up in her white *batiste* gown and lace hood, and responded in a few moments.

"Telephone for the doctors." (Dr. Zunker and Professor Ohlshausen were lodged at the Stadt Schloss.)

"But where will Your Majesty lie?" asked the nurse, after carrying out the command.

"I almost forgot about that,—in the balcony-room. The servants must go to work at once."

The balcony-room is the great *salon* of the Palais, and connects with the imperial bed-chamber *pro tempore* by folding-doors.

Presently the procession of maids and men-servants came rushing past the screen to turn the parlor into a *Wochenstube*. The big carpet was taken up, the floor swept, and covered with a thick linen cloth. All the silk hangings were removed, and others of *tulle* or cretonne put up, while couches and *fauteuils* of wicker-work replaced the gilded upholstered furniture. These preparations lasted a full hour. Meanwhile the Empress was growing worse, and Mrs. Macdonald awoke the Kaiser, who seemed not overpleased. However, he wrapped his pajamas about him, and sat down in a chair, while two lackeys unshackled their Majesties' joined brass bedsteads, just vacated, and removed the big upper mattress that covered both. The beds being separated, they were remade, and one had already been rolled into the *salon* (while in *Wochen* Her Majesty changes her couch daily), when Auguste Victoria let herself fall upon the other.

"Send away those men!" cried Mrs. Macdonald, looking at the Kaiser, and added: "now push the bed into the *salon*, quick, while I hold Her Majesty's hand."

William, in his pajamas, but not lacking in dignity, obeyed the nurse like a recruit. He worked like a Trojan as he trundled the heavy bed before him, but when its front legs reached the threshold, one of them caught in a rent of the parquet; there was a jerk, then a squeal: the little stranger had arrived.

According to Countess Eulenburg, the Kaiser told a tableful of guests in Liebenberg, during his visit in the winter of 1895, that his wife, immediately after giving birth, dons her corsets and keeps them on during the entire period of lying-in. Whether His Majesty is correctly

informed or not, I cannot say. If he is, the circumstance might properly be classed with others that have combined to undermine Her Majesty's health. Talking about her sister, the Princess Frederick Leopold, after the latter had given birth to her first child, my mistress said: "I do hope Louise will follow my advice with respect to her figure; it would be awful to see her come out of this without *Taille*" (waist); but as to the nature of her advice, the Kaiserin volunteered no information.

In royal households *accouchements* are not delicately regarded; the pregnancies of a Queen or of the Princesses concerning the weal or woe of the dynasty, are discussed by officials with disgusting freedom. No wonder the distinguished patients themselves become emboldened. In another chapter I have mentioned Her Majesty's blunt speech with a couple of men-servants on matters concerning her lying-in. That was not an uncommon incident. Lackeys being regarded as mere automatons, a German Queen would as soon order a man to assist her with her toilet as to help her mount her horse.

Auguste Victoria dines with her gentlemen and numerous guests sometimes until the very day she is brought to bed. When the Princess Frederick Leopold was about to be confined in the Potsdam Stadt Schloss, the Kaiserin, upon her arrival from Berlin, personally ordered a young lieutenant to take his stand opposite a certain window from where the birth would be signalled to him the moment it took place. "At this sign," said Her Majesty, "you will stop the soldiers' exercises for the rest of the day, as Her Royal Highness will be in want of absolute quiet after she gets through."

The lieutenant had to wait three hours. You can imagine the remarks of his colleagues and the quiet grins of the soldiers. They call him *Hebamme* to this day.

Once when the Glücksburgs were on a visit at the Berlin Schloss, I heard the Empress roundly abuse her *Kammerdiener* for compelling her sister Calma and the Duke to sleep in two separate beds.

"But," said *Herr Lück*, "we have no double beds at the Schloss."

"In that case you should have sent to Potsdam for one. You are long enough in the service to know that we Holsteins like to cuddle up to our husbands."

"The Duchess," continued Her Majesty, addressing me, "complains that she did not get warm all night. Please tell Madame von Larisch that a double bed must be set up in their Highnesses' apartments at once."

This happened on a Sunday, and the bed was actually brought from Potsdam by one of the evening trains, Sabbath or no Sabbath.

In August, 1893, when their Majesties were at the manœuvres in Rhineland, the Empress's shoulder was hurt by a shutter falling from a house in Coblenz the moment her carriage passed by. The injury was slight, and when the acting body-physician, Dr. Ernesti, made a professional call next morning, while Her Majesty was at her toilet, she told her *Kammerdiener*: "Notify the doctor that his services are not needed. My shoulder and breast are blue, but otherwise I am all right."

It passes my comprehension how Her Majesty reconciles this license of speech to her excessive prudery in other respects.

When we go to live at a castle not ordinarily used by the Court, the Empress always makes it a point to inspect the servants' quarters, to see whether the maids are lodged far enough from the men; but when, some time ago, one of her chamber-women was about to marry, she gave the poor girl such a glowing description of the joys

awaiting her, that Sophie came from the room as red as a lobster.

Miss Atkinson, the English governess, was dismissed for promenading in the park of the Neues Palais with a male colleague of hers, *Herr Kessler*, the teacher of the elder boys, and an unmarried man at that, and about the same time the Empress addressed a letter to General Vogel von Falckenstein, commander of the Fifth Division, complaining of the cold reserve which his officers maintained toward the ladies at balls and on similar occasions. "The Austrian officers," wrote Her Majesty, "appear to be more gallant than our gentlemen."

"They are," said the Princess of Meiningen when she heard of the letter: "I had scarcely spoken twenty words to an Austrian officer, a Prince of a once sovereign house, whom I met in Vienna, when he said: 'Your Royal Highness has the most exquisite bosoms in the room, and I have examined them all.'"

Such a remark is considered devilish polite in Vienna, and in perfect good taste, besides.

With respect to the letter, I should add that its authorship belongs by right to Countess Keller and *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, which ladies have probably good grounds for complaints. I doubt, however, that they would fare better in Austria, or anywhere outside of Kamtchatka. One of the two women wrote the note to Falckenstein and persuaded Her Majesty to copy and pass it off as her own, in order to give it more weight. As for the Empress, she is almost as bad a writer as a speaker. Shortly after the death of the late King Louis of Portugal, the *Fürstin* von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, his late Majesty's sister, bitterly complained of the letter of condolence my mistress had written her. "The Empress bestowed scarcely twenty words on my poor brother," said Her Royal Highness,

"but filled three or four pages with a description of her trip to Greece, that appeared to have been taken from some guide-book."

The latter surmise is probably correct. *Bädecker* is one of Her Majesty's closest friends; she usually keeps one or two of the red volumes on her writing-desk and constantly makes extracts from them to assist memory. Before she entered upon her first trip to Rome, the chamber-women found in her bed, on two successive mornings, slips of paper inscribed:

"Rom liegt an *die* Tiber."

Auguste Victoria was undoubtedly desirous of impressing this momentous fact upon her mind, and as for using the German preposition with the nominative, instead of the dative, it's but a venial sin.

The *Fürstin* misconstrued, however, Her Majesty's motives in mentioning King Louis's death but briefly. There was no want of sympathy on the Kaiserin's part, I am sure. As to ideas and expressions, even an Empress cannot always command them.

The Grand Duchess of Sachsen, too, complained that Her Majesty wrote her a meaningless letter after she had been made welcome in Weimar.

I am afraid these ladies forget that the Duke of Schleswig scarcely had the means to give his children a good education. Auguste Victoria is wanting in the most ordinary knowledge to quite an incredible extent. Thus she recently directed that a basin of cold water be placed in His Majesty's study, in order that "the liquid, by evaporation, absorb the foul air." She had read something about purifying air by water without comprehending it. When the Emperor had gone out in the evening, Her Majesty and Countess Keller went to the study to see

whether the scheme had worked. The basin was found to be half empty, and the Kaiserin, looking around with an air of triumph, exclaimed: "Ah, ah, report this to Countess Brockdorff, my dear. Her Excellency was inclined to doubt me when I told her of my theory. You see the water is gone, and the air much better in consequence."

Of course, the complacent Keller, like an Omrah of the Great Mogul, lifted up her hands, and cried: "Wonder, wonder, wonder!" but it is a fact that the Kaiser's *Teckels* lapped the water out of the basin.





## CHAPTER IX

The Empress has had a friend ; she has none now. Or one may say she has had two : Countess Waldersee and Pastor Stoecker. The latter is a dead man, politically and socially ; the Emperor himself arranged his funeral, and it was not one of the first class, like Bismarck's or the Chief of Staff's, either.

The former Mary Esther Lee, of New York, has been variously designated in the public prints as a person of 'most extraordinary influence with their Majesties,—as a sort of Egeria, appointed to instruct the modern Numa not only with regard to the forms of worship to be introduced, but also in general government matters. If the Kaiser bounced Bismarck to rid himself of somebody who had grown to love power and to think himself indispensable, why should he hesitate to drop the Waldersees, man and wife—or perhaps I should say *wife* and man, for Mary Esther is the moving spirit of that house—why, I ask, should he scruple to cashier these persons as soon as public opinion endowed them with an importance well-nigh overshadowing the throne ?

“The Moor has done his duty: the Moor may go!” There was no Bismarck to be held in check by fear of the ever-ready successor in 1891 ; *except* the all-powerful Chief of Staff ! As to his Countess,—having ceased to be a necessity to Auguste Victoria,—there was no reason for temporizing on her account.

Princess William that was had been in Her Excellency's leading-strings, as stated in preceding chapters; out of the gawky girl-despite-birth, the grand-dame-without-birth had made a lady capable of carrying her own weight and holding her tongue—when she had nothing to say. *Madame la Maréchale* also taught her charge—though the insincere aspects of it were foreign to her own mind—that religion, properly hung to the wind, makes an excellent cloak for insignificance. During the first year after Auguste Victoria's ascension to the throne, Countess Waldersee proved useful, too; on public occasions and in society she was an infallible counsellor, and a much less imperious one than Countess Brockdorff. Besides, when the latter whispered to her newly-made Majesty, everybody suspected her of giving advice, while Madame von Waldersee's tips passed for mere pleasantries.

But to be forever reminded of debts of gratitude is so tiresome. I believe no one at Court regarded the removal of the Waldersees to Altona with pleasanter anticipations than my mistress did. I attended the last audience Her Majesty granted the Countess. It was painfully formal; probably both women desired it so, each for reasons of her own. To give it a friendly turn, the Kaiserin asked Her Excellency, in the end, for her photograph "as a souvenir of their long acquaintance."

This latter fact by itself should suffice as a denial of the numberless stories about the intimacy alleged to have existed between my mistress and the General's wife. Intimacy between a Royal Schleswig and the daughter of David Lee, of the United States! Intimacy between the German Empress, Queen of Prussia, and the wife of Eléonore Hoffmeyer's descendant! The persons who first gave utterance to that Canterbury tale must have gathered their ideas of Her Majesty's character from the tittle-tattle of

silly women who act as "barkers" at our charity bazaars. At one of these, held at the War Ministry, I believe, I first heard Countess Waldersee spoken of as the "Kaiser-in's aunt," a title probably invented for no other purpose than to please Her Excellency's own friends. I carried it home with me, and their Majesties adopted it, but not in a friendly spirit. When the Kaiser alludes to the *Volks-schulgesetz*, that has failed, or similar measures, in conversation with his wife, he sometimes says "thy aunt" or "thy uncle;" when the Kaiserin speaks of Pastor Stoecker nowadays, maybe she calls him "my aunt's friend" or "my uncle's political bedfellow." That the Kaiser never regarded Countess Waldersee as an equal or a favorite is evident from the fuss he made when he granted Her Excellency permission to wear the Queen Olga decoration, given her by the King of Württemberg. If he had raised her and her husband to the princely dignity, he could not have shouted louder than he did about this act of cheap courtesy.

Count and Countess Waldersee attended most of the Court ceremonies held at the beginning of the present reign, and Her Ladyship's fine laces and diamonds were much admired then; but as soon as Court mourning was over and the noisome *fêtes* at the Schloss and palace were inaugurated, she commenced sending her "regrets," pretending to be in failing health. That Her Excellency was ever received *en famille*, or even without running the gauntlet of notification to and from the Court-marshal or grand-mistress, etc., is an invention pure and simple. It is true, however, that Prince and Princess William often visited at the General Staff building during the last year of the old Kaiser's illness, yet their calls were not of a social nature. About that time, William had religion on the brain, and the pious Countess was just the woman to encourage such a craze.

If the widow of Prince Noer had remained single, the Kaiserin might have continued to regard her as a friend and relative even after her elevation to the throne, but as Countess Waldersee—never. Are not the Waldersees illegitimate, the offspring of a Duke of Anhalt and an adulterous woman, Frau Neitschütz, *née* Hoffmeyer, who, to make matters worse, disregarded the maxim *le divorce est le sacrement de l'adultère* into the bargain? I have heard Her Majesty more than once express strong opinions on this subject: a lady, honored by the hand of an Augustenburger, throwing herself away on a social nobody, whose grandfather received a surname only when twenty years old! This without prejudice to the present incumbent of the title, of course. Her Majesty likes Count Waldersee as far as she likes anybody outside of her husband, her children and herself, and William likes and fears him at the same time.

Of the ladies and gentlemen of the service, only one, *Herr* von der Knesebeck, Vice-Grand-master of Ceremonies, enjoys his mistress's confidence and friendship. After what has been said of Countess Brockdorff, I need hardly mention that this lady is not a favorite. Dames of the Court *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff and *Comtesse* Keller are old maids with the faults of their class; that is especially true with regard to the latter, called "*Speck-Mathilde*" on account of her oft-professed axiom, that anything (*Speck*, *i.e.*, bacon and the like) is good enough for people who are not Empresses or *filles d'honneur*. Countess Keller is buyer-in-ordinary to Her Majesty, and it is this lady who selects for the house-servants those gorgeous presents—cotton petticoats, wash-rags, glass vases, and knitted gloves—that grace the palace Christmas-trees. It cannot be denied, though, that she is a thorough courtier. Any impossible thing that Her Majesty may order,

Countess Keller enthusiastically approves of. "*Speck-Mathilde* would rather bite off her tongue than inform Her Majesty that a square peg will not fit into a round hole," says Princess Frederick Leopold, and I believe she would.

Clara von Gersdorff also rejoices in a sobriquet. Old and young in the palace speak of her as *Rühr-Clara* (Sentimental Clara), or *Der süsse Dusel* (Sweet Dizzy). The first nickname has reference to her loud, long-drawn-out mode of speech. If, on leaving her room, she gives orders to her maid through the open door, her voice can be heard all over the staircase. The other *epitheton* is supposed to describe her character, which forever fluctuates between high-soaring idealism and the pettiest of mundane nothingnesses. She is blonde, carries her forty years well, has a pale, broad face, square shoulders, and walks as if shod with cuirassier boots.

When I see my mistress in such hands as Keller's and Gersdorff's, I am always reminded of what Walpole wrote about Christian VII of Denmark: "He is a genteel enough figure, but surrounded by a pack of — whose interest it is to make him one if they can." Auguste Victoria might have turned out an altogether different woman from what she is, had she not fallen in with narrow-minded, paltry characters the moment she entered upon her new sphere of life in Berlin.

The Kaiser hates Gersdorff more than the grand-mistress,—hates and maltreats her with sarcastic references to her figure,—for no other outward reason, apparently, than because her large, red, and ugly hands offend him.

If Countess Bertha von Bassewitz were not twenty-three and pretty, she might win Her Majesty's love, for she is an agreeable, talented, and high-minded young woman whom everybody likes.

Baron Mirbach and Count Keller, the Grand-master and *Kammerherr*, respectively, are stereotyped Prussian officials, cringing before their mistress, and intolerably abusive to all of lesser rank than their own. *Herr* von Mirbach tries to make himself indispensable by catering to Her Majesty's church-building schemes; but while acknowledging the Baron's talents as a business manager, the august lady is far from liking him as a man.

Both Keller and Mirbach hate the amiable Bodo Knesebeck, whom the Empress Frederick once called "the only gentleman at her son's Court," but as he is a most deserving man, besides being a favorite, their intermittent intrigues are of little moment. Before entering upon the service of Auguste Victoria, Baron Knesebeck was the confidant of the old Empress Augusta, who left him quite a sum of money; he is to-day the only non-relative of the royal house who participates in the occasional family dinners. *Herr* von Mirbach and the House-marshals must order and arrange these affairs, but have to withdraw and make room for their subaltern as soon as the dinner-hour strikes, or "as soon as they have counted spoons and covers," as they say in the palace. This expression dates, so far as it refers to spoons, from Count Moltke's ninetieth birthday (October 26, 1890), when the King of Saxony had to go without soup at the state banquet because he found no spoon at his place, and because it was against etiquette either to ask whether he was not hungry or to send a footman to get the missing article. And when, after the spring parade of 1896, some Bavarian officers were to be entertained in the White Hall, it was discovered that no seats had been provided for them. House-marshal Baron von Egloffstein had ordered covers for all the Prussians, but the South German allies had been entirely forgotten. The two *faux pas* nearly cost Egloffstein his position.

But to return to *Herr* von der Knesebeck. He spends every other week in Her Majesty's service, and is liberal and kind-hearted. Where his colleagues, Mirbach, Keller, Lyncker, and Eulenburg, discredit the Court by their nig-gardness, he exhibits the *savoir-vivre* of the old regime. So he gave an organ-grinder, whom Her Majesty, during her stay in Sassnitz, in the summer of 1892, had ordered to play a whole morning for the children's benefit, twenty marks. Thereupon—that is, when the bills were audited in Berlin—cries of terror, amazement, and indignation.

"A double gold crown to a miserable Dago!" Baron Mirbach and Count Eulenburg pronounced such recklessness unprecedented, and said they did not know what the Minister of the royal house would do about it. "Really, we cannot pass this bill without special authorization."

"If that is so," said *Herr* von der Knesebeck, coolly, "I herewith deposit twenty marks to remain in Your Excellencies' hands while the matter is in abeyance. Damn a man who is not willing to risk a trifle to give the Queen's children a good time!"

The case is still in abeyance.

So great is Her Majesty's confidence in *Herr* von der Knesebeck, that, if at all possible, she submits to him every little matter concerning her public conduct, either verbally or in writing. In the course of the year, Empress and chamberlain exchange hundreds of letters, some of the Kaiserin's being five and six pages long.

Bodo Knesebeck saved the Empress from making herself ridiculous, and from seriously compromising her husband and the government, during the Berlin riots of February, 1892. Incidentally the chamberlain saved our mistress from her lord's lasting displeasure on that occasion, which probably counts more with her than anything else. For weeks we had prepared for the great carnival ball of



February 25, when the invited gentlemen were to appear for the first time in English Court-dress, an event William looked forward to no less eagerly than a girl does to her début in long frocks. For the ball, the late King's favorite, *première ballerina* Marie Koebisch-Wolden, had arranged a gorgeous revival of that most graceful dance, *menuet à la reine*, which was to be tripped before the throne when the evening's festivities were at their height. My mistress meant to surpass all her previous efforts in the matter of personal adornment.

At last the festive day had come. Early in the morning the entire stock of crown-jewels, all excepting the crown itself, were brought to the royal dressing-room, and Her Majesty, Countess Brockdorff, and *Frau* von Haake spent hours making and remaking new combinations of the stones and ornaments, most of which can be put to various uses, as pins, buttons, buckles, brooches, etc. Then, all of a sudden, the cry ran through the Schloss's chambers: "Berlin is in revolt!"

"There will be no *menuet*, rather a *Carmagnole*," lamented the anxious; "instead of beribboned and belaced silk coats, the blouse; in place of honeyed words and pretty toy swords, 'pipe in cheek, loaded canes on thigh,' as in the days when they sang '*Vive le son du canon*.'"

Baron Mirbach sent me to my mistress to prepare her for noisy scenes in the neighborhood of the Schloss. I found the Empress in the room facing the great fountain, running excitedly from one window to the other. In the square below, people were assembling in groups, talking and gesticulating.

I delivered the message and, of my own accord, added: "His Majesty will not drive out this morning."

"And if he loves me, he will remain, he *must* remain with us until this awful revolution is quelled."

"I entreat Your Majesty to be calm," I made bold to say, as Countess Brockdorff kept silent; "according to the papers, these people want bread and want work; they have no thought of violence. Besides," I said, "*Herr von Richt-hofen* has sent the entire police reserves to the Schloss. There are fifty men at each entrance, and more guarding the cellar-openings and the waterside. All the corridors are patrolled, and a dozen men are on the lookout on the roof."

"The roof!" cried the Empress, as if swayed by a new fear. "Oh, *Gräfin*" (this to Countess Brockdorff), "they may throw bombs on the roof and destroy us all! I must go to see the Kaiser at once."

Second breakfast commenced half an hour earlier than usual, and we hurried through its four courses, following their Majesties' example. The Kaiserin's eyes were red with crying, and some minutes before dessert the children came in, a thing that does not happen more than once or twice a year. His Majesty loves his little ones in his own way; that is, he likes to keep them at a distance. If brought into personal contact with the youngsters, his sense of decorum revolts, and he does not know what to do with them, except to criticise their dress or military demeanor.

"I am not going on a journey," he said, and, looking at the Crown Prince, added: "You and your brothers have not come to say good-bye?" The Empress bowed her head and whispered something while the Kaiser leaned over the table, holding his hand to his ear.

"*Dummes Zeug*," he said, loud enough for all to hear, and pushed back his chair; "I am riding out as I do every day in the year; there is no use making a scene, 'Dona'!" He kissed some of the children, fondled the heads of the younger ones, and, drawing the Empress's arm through his own, walked out, preceded by the House-marshal and his adjutants.

When, a quarter of an hour later, the Empress came from his room, she declared: "Thank God, the Kaiser will take his pistols along, one in the right pocket of his trousers, and one in his coat pocket." Then Her Majesty led the way to the state apartments, where we took our stand at the windows of the Knights' Hall, to see William ride from Portal V a few minutes later.

As he passed, His Majesty looked up, and the Empress followed him along the front of the Schloss through the Black Eagle chamber, the Red Velvet chamber, and the old chapel. As we crossed over to the windows of the picture-gallery, he waved his hand for the last time, and we saw him spur his horse into a quick trot. Only then it was observed that the Emperor was without his ordinary escort of grooms and gendarmes. Merely Adjutant von Moltke and one other military gentleman accompanied him. The Kaiserin was beside herself. "He will be killed, I know he will be killed, and myself and the children will come next. Let us flee from this room, in front of which, as the Kaiser says, kingship was put to the greatest indignities."<sup>1</sup>

Her Majesty ran to her own apartment, and through the speaking-tube ordered that all her children be brought down at once. She was pale and was trembling. Seeing the jewels, where they had been left in the morning, she began to hastily replace them in the boxes. "Haake," she said, "shall arrange all my own jewelry in like manner; everything must be packed at once."

"But to-night's ball?" suggested Countess Keller.

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<sup>1</sup> Standing on the balcony of the Schloss in March, 1848, Frederick William IV was ordered by the revolting populace to salute the citizens, killed by the soldiery the day before, by taking off his hat, and complied with the request.

"There will be no festival," said the royal lady, resignedly, "or a very different one from that promised; namely, when the Kaiser is saved, and joins myself and the children at the Neues Palais."

Countess Keller, in her usual complacent fashion, at once acquiesced. "I beseech Your Majesty not to go without me," she shrieked, hysterically. "I will protect and, if need be, die for my beloved Empress."

Meanwhile, the rioting had been begun in earnest on the *Schloss Platz* and in the neighborhood of the *Lustgarten*. The strikers and out-of-works, who had willingly made room for the Emperor when he passed by them—who had even doffed their hats and caps at the royal radiance—suddenly recollected their self-imposed mission and began to offer trouble to the police. They refused to move on, and threatened the horses of the mounted *Schutzleute* with violence unless they kept off their toes. As yet, they had not worked themselves up to a state of excitement which menaced the troopers themselves. The rears of the backing steeds formed the base of popular assault.

"See there, there!" cried the Empress, "I told you this was a revolution. The crowds are getting thicker and thicker; they will overthrow the police and then attack the palace. And the Kaiser is away. We must go at once. Our only safety lies in flight."

"Fetch Knesebeck," I whispered to *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff; "he alone can set our mistress right. We shall all be disgraced if this mad plan is carried out. Be quick, before that toad-eating Keller drives the Kaiserin thoroughly crazy."

*Herr* von der Knesebeck appeared after a little while, suave and smiling as usual. He did not exasperate Her Majesty by underrating the danger. He pointed out to her that the Schloss was the safest place for herself, her

children, and her jewels. "There are about five hundred men, soldiers, *Schutzleute*, and detectives inside these walls," he argued, "and if an attack were made, fifty thousand others will be on the outside before they begin to batter down the gates, and the gates are the strongest in the Empire. Now let us assume that Your Majesty would choose to leave for Potsdam. At least four carriages would be needed to carry Your Majesty, the Princes, and the *entourage* to the station. Then there is the escort. Your Majesty would not like to brave the mob alone, and the royal livery, re-enforced by bayonets or sabres, might exasperate the people. But let us say, for argument's sake, that we get out of Berlin without trouble. If this is a revolution, as Your Majesty thinks, it will not be confined to the capital. It will follow us to Potsdam; and the Neues Palais is to the Schloss what Heligoland is to Gibraltar."

"In Potsdam we have the subterranean exit,"<sup>1</sup> faltered out Her Majesty.

"True, and if Your Majesty decides to use it, at any time, you will find yourself among your soldiers," said *Herr* von der Knesebeck impressively,—“among your soldiers there as you are under their protection here.

"And now," concluded the chamberlain, with a little fib, "I see Her Excellency is making signs; matters of toilet demand immediate attention, I dare say." (*With a bow*) "If Your Majesty has anything to communicate to the Kaiser, who, I understand, is to come back by three o'clock, I am at Your Majesty's commands."

"Then you think we are really safe?"

"Safe?" laughed *Herr* von der Knesebeck,—“Your Majesty is pleased to joke. Would the Kaiser leave you

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<sup>1</sup> This is a conduit leading from the basement of the Neues Palais to the barracks of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion opposite.

and the Princes if there was a shadow of danger within ten thousand miles?"

Brockdorff, Keller, Gersdorff, Haake, and myself all took up this cue and dwelt upon it and enlarged upon it, and before Her Majesty could work herself up into another fit of fright the maids had taken her in hand to begin preparations for the night's ball. When the Kaiser returned, he went at once to the Empress to tell of his adventures with the mob: how he had "cowed the ugliest of the rioters by a single look;" there had been no hostile demonstrations "where *he* showed himself;" in some places he had even been cheered. "And" (here His Majesty had a good laugh) "in the *Thiergarten* half a dozen fellows tried to thrust petitions into my hand. Some of them I let run beside me for a good quarter of an hour, and not till they were well-nigh exhausted did I order Moltke to take their papers. Among others, one exceedingly fat person engaged in this exercise, and I thought he would expire as he tried to keep pace with Extase" (William's favorite horse).

The rest of the evening passed in preparations for the ball, and the feast came off in a blaze of glory. We had our *menuet à la reine*, while the Berliners danced the *Carmagnole* to the tune of crashing show-windows and demolished doors, as our guests reported under their breath, when out of ear-shot of their Majesties and the high officials. "I came in a second-class *Droschke*, and the crowd allowed me to pass without a murmur," said one ministerial councillor, "but my old Excellency had to ask a *Schutzmann* to take the place of his groom at the *Puppenbrücke*, and the man of the law was obliged to use his weapon freely to enforce the right of way."

"I hope there was no blood spilled," said I.

"Mortal wounds were not dealt. The *Schutzleute* had orders to use the flats of their swords only, but there will be many sore heads, nevertheless, to-morrow. Besides, all the police stations are filled with prisoners, and about fifty stores—bakery and provision stores, most of them—have been sacked."

The situation continued semi-threatening for two days longer, for the newspaper accounts of the dazzling Court *fête* had been red rags to the mob. From early morn till night angry masses collected about the castle, shouting and throwing their arms about, and persons leaving the Schloss on foot were sure to be greeted and followed by derisive grunts. Once or twice gentlemen coming from Court were jostled by the crowd, whereupon the Emperor, who was an interested witness of the scenes, telephoned to *Herr* von Richthofen to have the *Lustgarten*, the streets, and the three bridges leading to the castle cleared. In the charges by the mounted policemen and by *Schutzleute*, fifty or sixty persons received sabre cuts and others were ridden down, the Kaiser standing at the balcony window that saw his granduncle's submission to mob law, and viewing the bloody sallies with grim satisfaction.

On February 27 the children clamored loudly for an outing. They had been locked in the house for three days, and confinement was telling on the little ones. But Her Majesty would not hear of the proposed carriage ride. Only after Major von Falkenhayn had patrolled the streets in citizen's dress to ascertain the popular animus, and reported that the riotous movement had entirely subsided, were the children sent to the *Thiergarten* in an old carriage, driven by a man in every-day clothes and preceded by ditto grooms on horseback, who were to keep well ahead and communicate with the police along the route. The police, by the way, had played a distinguished part in the

Emperor's outing on the first day of the riot, too. Several hours before His Majesty rode from Portal V, a thorough *Sicherheitsdienst* had been arranged along the line William intended to travel: *Schutzleute* in uniform or civilian dress walked among the rioters, listening to their talk and occasionally packing off an over-loud individual, while others kept the road open and the people moving. Besides, a mounted *Schutzmann* was posted on every street-corner to watch the houses and passers-by. And this line of vigilance extended over all parts of the *Thiergarten*, which, moreover, was traversed by police and detectives in cabs and on fleet horses galloping up and down the bridle-path like private gentlemen. The royal *Marstall* had sent a hundred grooms to the park to watch over the master and act as *galopins* for the police lieutenants and captains stationed at different points. The garrison was confined in the barracks,—“and, moreover,” said Baron Richthofen, to whom I am obliged for these minute statements, which I was to repeat to Her Majesty, “and, moreover, the Kaiser had his two six-shooters. But, believe me,” added the chief of police, “there was no need whatever of His Majesty's bellicose preparations. If there had been the slightest apprehension of violence, the Kaiser would never have been allowed outside of the Schloss.”

“But if he had insisted? He has an iron will.”

“Ah,” said the Baron, “there are moments in a sovereign's life when his will is of no more account than that of a raw recruit.”

During all these days Her Majesty was in such fear and excitement that even *Herr* von der Kneesebeck could not persuade her to abandon the idea of flight altogether. On the morning of the twenty-sixth the Empress had her jewels packed anew,—officials had taken charge of the crown-jewels after the ball,—and her belongings were kept in a



state of preparedness for sudden removal throughout the week.

To return to the subject of Her Majesty's *intimes*. Among the persons of the household, as pointed out, *Herr* von der Knesebeck is the only one in whom the Kaiserin places implicit confidence, but at the same time he is not of "sufficient birth" or rank to be regarded as other than a faithful servant. For a *Kammerherr* in actual service, whatever his qualifications of heart and head are, is little short of a titled flunky. When he has *du jour*, he must be at his mistress's beck and call the same as the *Kammerdiener*. If Her Majesty drives out, he follows in a second carriage, or, when the children are taken along, in the fourth; if she visits people, he has to wait at the door of the antechamber; if she goes to bazaars or the theatre, he trots in front of her or behind her, disbursing her alms, buying her tickets, and seeing that her chair is in the right place; in short, a *Kammerherr* is all but a lackey in name, the only difference being that he wears gold buttons on his coat, instead of silver lace, and carries around umbrellas, opera-glasses, and muffs, instead of wraps and footstools. To a *Kammerherr*, the Empress does not speak so broadly about being brought to bed as to a *Kammerdiener*, but she would as soon allow a *valet de chambre* to smoke in her presence as treat a chamberlain on a footing of equality. And royal valets, mind you, have been regarded with suspicion ever since Louis XV sent half a dozen of them to the Bastille, when, by accident, he overheard a fellow whisper: "Come and let's play with the Duchess of Burgundy." Her Royal Highness was that *Dauphine* who considered it exquisite fun to have her servants drag her along by her legs in the gardens of Versailles during moonless evenings.

Among non-royal women, Her Majesty at one time looked upon Princess George Radziwill and Countess Goertz with

feelings akin to friendship. As before stated, both are French women. The first, *née* Marie Branicki, is the wife of a former lieutenant of the *Garde du Corps*, who, during a long residence in Potsdam and Berlin, succeeded in accumulating a few million marks of debts. Now the couple hold forth on Prince Anton Radziwill's Polish domains, where dirt is wedded to *Fusel*, and where, on an income of ten thousand marks per year, they can live like fighting-cocks. Two things drew Auguste Victoria to Princess George. Her Grace was as capable of throwing away money as the Royal Highness and Majesty, and both excelled for a time in the matter of bringing forth a child year by year. The Kaiserin married two years before Countess Marie did, in 1881, had a child in 1882 and one in 1883, 1884, 1887, 1888, 1890, and 1892. *Comtesse* de Branicki married in 1883 and had children in 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1889, and 1894,—four boys and two girls. In some instances they followed each other at intervals of ten months. Countess Goertz, too, would come up to Napoleon's sarcastic estimate of "woman's greatness." Married in February, 1876, she had a child in January, 1877, and before the year was up was delivered of number two. With her other four children she allowed herself more time.

Since the Radziwills moved from Berlin, Princess Marie's name has never been mentioned at the Palais, and the relations between the Empress and Countess Goertz are strained ever since the Kaiser declared Her *Erlaucht* (Illustrious Ladyship) an eminently beautiful woman.

Jealousy on the one hand and egotism re-enforced by pride on the other, prevent friendly relations between Her Majesty and her relatives on the Kaiser's side. I have already spoken of Auguste Victoria's little unpleasantnesses with Princess Henry and the Hereditary Princess of Meiningen. With the latter, a sprightly and pretty woman,

having a record for frivolity and a tongue as sharp as a needle, the Empress would fain live in peace, if Her Royal Highness was half willing, but Charlotte is like one of those proud stags who would rather fight than eat; to coin epigrams on her sister's weaknesses and little vanities gives her far more pleasure than to revel in Her Majesty's good graces and be loaded with favors,—“such as they are,” I might add, in “Lottchen's” own language. For years the two women have made war upon each other. It pleased Her Majesty to acquaint the Kaiser with all the gossip, new and old, she heard about her sister-in-law, and the latter retaliated by making Auguste Victoria ridiculous. Once (the church-building craze, inaugurated by the Kaiserin, was just then at its height, and the two ladies were driving together in Friedrich Strasse) their carriage was stopped by a break-down on the road. An old man, standing near, recognized Her Majesty, and politely uncovered, holding his hat in his outstretched hand, while making a low obeisance. This loyal subject happened to be extremely bald. “See here, old cock,” cried a *gamin* observing the scene, “cover up that vacant lot, or the Kaiserin will build a church on it, sure as you live.” The Empress was furious, but Charlotte laughed right out. “I beg of you not to repeat this impertinent remark to ‘Willie,’” said the Empress, earnestly.

“Of course not. I am not your Brockdorff or Keller.”

But the same evening His Majesty told the story to some officers of the Queen's Dragoons, at whose mess he supped.

Some time after that, there was a *fête* at the Villa Meiningen, to which many young officers of the Kaiser Franz regiment were commanded, and when all had dined and drunk well, Princess Charlotte proposed *Zettelschreiben*; that is, a game played as follows: all participants sit around a table, armed with pencil and paper. At a given signal each

writes down the name of some society man, after which the space written on is folded over and the sheet handed to the person opposite, who returns his or her sheet. Next the name of a lady is put down, the sheets being handled as before. At the third signal all persons write down the intentions of the unknown gentleman on top with respect to the unknown lady below. Then the cards or sheets are thrown into a bowl from which they are drawn one after another and read aloud.

By lot the Hereditary Prince was selected to read off the *Zettel*, and did so with good humor, giving some choice specimens of pornographist writings without paying the least attention to the presence of his wife and the latter's *Hofdamen*, Madame von Brochen and Madame von Berger; but suddenly coming across the name Plüskow, he stopped.

Captain von Plüskow, of the First Guards, the tallest and best-looking officer in the German army, passed for Her Royal Highness's lover at one time: he was, I believe, the predecessor of Colonel von Plessen, the latter now one of His Majesty's adjutants.

"Captain von Plüskow," repeated the Prince—"Plüskow and Charlotte Meiningen: 'the chimera that one tries to keep for one's self, what is only a half, calls for my compassion.'"

Here His Highness broke off. "Well said," he remarked, looking sharply at his wife; "I suppose I am the person to be pitied, but the *mot* hardly bears out the purpose of the game."

Her Royal Highness clapped her hands with merriment. "A funny coincidence," she cried, "very funny, but go on; besides that of a philosophical nature, I expressed some other sentiments on that *Zettel*."

"Yes, yes," pleaded the company, "Your Highness must proceed; we insist."

"Very well," shouted Prince Bernhardt; "but if any of you young fellows become contaminated, I won't answer to your mammas." Then he cleared his throat, and was about to commence reading, when his eyes opened wider and wider. His lips rehearsed the sentence before him, but did not voice it. "*Nein, nein*," he said; "*es ist zu schwein'sch; so was kann nur mein 'Lottchen' schreiben*." ("No, no; it's too dirty; only my 'Lottchen' could write down a thing like that.") With this, and shaking with laughter, he handed the paper to Madame von Brochen, enjoining her to throw it into the fire after perusal. Needless to say, the command was not obeyed.

No one expects to hear of prayer-meetings or of lectures *à la Gräfin Hahn-Hahn*<sup>1</sup> from Villa Meiningen, but this incident really exceeded the license permitted the frivolous daughter of an Emperor. Coming on top of the newsboy's joke which Her Royal Highness had popularized, Auguste Victoria seized the opportunity for taking an unusually firm stand. Too timid to grapple with the Hereditary Princess herself, she sent word, by Baron Mirbach, that Madame von Berger would no longer be received at Court. There followed an angry reply by Charlotte, who sarcastically asked if this decree of banishment was enacted for the same reasons that "prompted the Empress Frederick to exclude Countess Brockdorff from her circle." Then the Kaiser and Prince Bernhardt had another falling out; the latter resigned from the army and, with his wife, went to live in Athens.

Nowadays the relations between the two ladies are quite amicable, and for a very good reason: the Princess having

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<sup>1</sup> A German Catholic writer, who, after sending a lot of licentious books into the world, turned a complete somersault, and, after buying back her first novels, produced fiction of the most pious character.

removed to Breslau, they never see each other, except at stated festive occasions, when opportunities for quarrels are few and far between. The same applies to the rest of the Kaiser's sisters, all of whom suffered the Empress's intermittent displeasure before their husbands carried them off. At present there is but one Prussian Princess living at Court,—the widow of the Red Prince, Her Royal Highness Marie, *née* Princess of Anhalt.

She is a *grande dame* of noble carriage, a kindly and altogether lovely woman, who, despite poverty, keeps up a dignified state.

Like the Empress Frederick, her old-time rival in the affections of King and Emperor William I, this royal lady is cursed with a son who is a complete egoist. Her late husband, the brutal and churlish Frederick Charles, who never relaxed the grasp of his riding-whip at home, had no sooner closed his drunken eyes, than his heir, Frederick Leopold, kicked his mother out of his castles: the palace on Wilhelm's Platz and the country-seats Glienecke, Dreilinden, etc. This boy, scarcely of age, had no room for his parent. Every roof and every foot of his immense landed possessions he needed for his overgrown self.

There were family meetings and notes of protest from all royal relatives of Europe; Frederick Leopold could neither be bullied nor wheedled. He stood on his rights, and defied the Emperor himself. So His Majesty finally had to patch up the ugly old Albrecht Palace, on Leipziger Platz, for her, where Princess Marie now lives, attended by a single *Hofdame*, Countess Pückler, and Baron von Wangenheim, who has been her gentleman of the bed-chamber in name and, it is said, in fact for many years,—even long before Frederick Charles died.

There is a rumor that Her Royal Highness's relations to the Baron were legalized by a marriage enacted before

the Minister of the Royal House, *Herr* von Wedel, but I have never been able to verify this statement, which is guarded like a state secret. The fact that the Emperor's and Empress's invitations to the Princess now always include *Herr* von Wangenheim seems to indicate that the couple is at last united.

In former years, that is, up to 1894, when the Kaiserin and her sister, Princess Frederick Leopold, were on friendly terms, Auguste Victoria used to take sides with her brother-in-law against the widowed Princess; but now that she and Sophie Louise hardly speak, Her Majesty gives her dislike to Baron Wangenheim as an excuse for neglecting her amiable grandaunt. Some little time before Frederick Leopold's wedding, the Kaiser mentioned to Her Majesty that, in a month or so, Aunt Marie would be without a roof over her head. "She is of opinion that I have to provide her with a suitable home," he said.

"Is it possible?" The Empress, who always acts as if she had never known poverty, raised her eyes in astonishment. "Perhaps she aspires to Babelsberg or Charlottenburg, or perhaps she wants me to give up the Marble Palace for her accommodation."

"Calm yourself," replied the Emperor; "I have already decided what to do. I told her she could have rooms at Brühl."

"Brühl?" queried the Empress; "where is that?"

This ignorance vexed William. "In South-west Africa, near Klein-Popo," he said, brusquely, and left Her Majesty and her ladies blushing.

So poor Princess Marie had to move with her little Court to the tumble-down palace between Bonn and Cologne, while dozens of well-kept castles stand empty in the neighborhood of the capital. Brühl, once a residence of the Electoral Princes of Cologne, was last overhauled in

The reader may imagine the state the old pile is in. Her orderer that his aunt should have the use of hers, besides servants' quarters. A corresponding set of furniture, bedding, silver, and linen was also at her disposal; but every time she needed something extra, the Seneschal, Baron von Solemacher-Ant, acted like a madman. He dared not refuse Her Highness, and at the same time feared to go against hers. And such society for the widow of the proudly warrior of the times! The *Frau Bürgermeister*, the *Frau Pfarrer*, the *Frau Amtmann*, the *Frau* What's-she-doing.

In the afternoon, when the Princess entertained these ladies, a *Frau Stürmond* naïvely asked: "But, Your Royal Highness, why did you come down to this lonely chateau? It must be very annoying to a lady who has lived in the great world all her life to put up with such poor company as we are, and with such comforts, or rather discomforts, as this castle offers."

"My dear woman," answered Princess Marie, raising herself proudly, "I am penniless and homeless, truths you may be unable, or perhaps unwilling, to believe. But that makes them none the less onerous, I assure you. You may say: 'You have a son, the richest prince in the empire.' Ah, yes; but my Leopold is not an agreeable man. He is hard-hearted, and he wishes me dead every day in the year."

"There was not a tremor in the voice of that proud old woman as she spoke these damning words," said one of the ladies afterward. "We all felt that the meanness of her surroundings and of the person to whom she gave life does not soil her skirts even. Her Royal Highness seems to be above petty things and above great, heart-burning sorrows too."



The Princess put up with Brühl for two or three seasons; then she wrote to His Majesty, declining to use his ten rooms any longer.

Still worse was their Imperial Majesties' treatment of Princess Marie during the severe illness of the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Oldenburg (who died in 1895). Princess Elizabeth, who was the older sister of the Duchess of Connaught and Princess Frederick Charles's second daughter, fell dangerously ill in June, 1890, while attending the christening of little Victoria<sup>1</sup> in Potsdam, and her case was diagnosed as acute inflammation of the bowels, making an indefinite stay imperative. Princess Frederick Charles came day after day from Berlin to nurse her daughter, and repeatedly complained to the Empress that this journeying to and fro in the heat of the summer was killing her, an old woman. At one of these conversations, the House-marshal, Baron von Lyncker, happened to be present, and when conducting Her Majesty to her carriage, this official asked if she had any orders respecting Her Royal Highness. The Kaiserin looked annoyed, and answered: "No."

In the beginning of July, Princess Frederick Charles was in a state approaching nervous prostration, and her physicians told her that she must either go and live in Potsdam or go to some other country-place; those fatiguing trips had to stop at once. Again Her Royal Highness submitted the case to her imperial niece, and a third time Her Majesty expressed merely vague regrets.

Next day the Princess was carried off to Woerlitz by order of the Duke, her brother, who had been informed of Her Royal Highness's precarious condition.

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria, eldest daughter of Prince and Princess Frederick Leopold of Prussia.

"I tremble lest the world may condemn me," she wrote to her sick daughter a few days afterward—"you, my dear, in sorest need of a mother's care, and I seemingly enjoying myself at this ever jolly Court. But what could I do? His Majesty would not offer me a bed at your present home, though, I understand, one hundred and fifty of the chambers in the Stadt Schloss are unoccupied. Needless to say, your brother Leopold likewise refused to understand my situation. Does this boy ask his mother to go down on her knees before him to obtain leave to stay at one of his castles that, by right, should be mine as long as I live?"

Such brutality seems almost incredible, but Court-marshal Eulenburg offered a very lucid explanation. "If Her Royal Highness had been lodged at the Stadt Schloss, it would have been necessary to give accommodations to her *Hofdame* and to two or three maids at the very least. That," said the Count, "meant the feeding of four or five persons, which we could ill afford."

There may have been another reason, besides. As the Frederick Leopolds were living at the Stadt Schloss (their country-seat Glienecke being in course of reconstruction), it would have been the proper thing to tender to the old Princess the use of Her Majesty's rooms; but, though there was every probability that Aunt Marie would decline the offer, the very thought prodded the Emperor and Empress to the verge of indelicacy.

Sophie Louise herself asked her sister many times to allow her to spend the last months of her pregnancy at the Marble Palace or Babelsberg, both castles standing idle. "The military exercises under my windows in this place<sup>1</sup> threaten to drive me mad," said Her Royal Highness.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Lustgarten* in front of the Stadt Schloss is used as a drill-ground.

"You ought to understand that what I need most in my present excitable condition is rest and repose. *You*, who always have your children in the quietude of the Marble Palace, should appreciate my plight better than anybody."

But pleading was of no avail. Sophie Louise had to hold out in the heat and dust and noise of the Stadt Schloss.

Her Majesty's relations to the women of other reigning families are no more cordial, though less fluctuating, than those to her sister and sisters-in-law. Years ago she was intimate with the Queen of Italy, but the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Helene of Montenegro caused a breach that subsequent *entrevues* failed to heal. The Kaiserin did try, and tried hard, to gain the friendship of the Czarina; but her partisanship for the "fighting Grand Duchess," as Victoria of Hesse-Darmstadt is called in Court circles, undid all her efforts to appear gracious and obliging to the younger and prettier cousin.

In the conjugal imbroglio, Alexandra Feodorovna has supported her brother from the start. The Grand Duchess's continued obstinacy and incompatibility of temper, she thinks, would have ceased long ago if the Kaiserin did not uphold the little spitfire.

Maybe my mistress is guilty of the offence charged; yet it is safe to assume that she acts out of sympathy with the young wife's peculiar position rather than because she dislikes the Grand Duke, or believes in opposing a husband's authority.

As for Victoria, she probably inherited her fighting qualities from her parents. Edinburgh, now Duke of Saxe-Coburg, is known all the world over as a most disagreeable man, and the reputation of his wife, Duchess Marie, a sister of the late Alexander III, is far from sanctity. For a long time, in the years 1879, 1880, 1881,

1882, and part of 1883, the couple were not on speaking terms, and each slept in his or her little bed. Finally, they patched up their quarrel for the time being, and Beatrice, the only remaining unmarried daughter, was the result. Is it strange that the offspring of such a union should be a shrew?

But that is not Ernest Louis's chief point of complaint. The first and principal reason for the august couple's quarrels is the want of a son. Victoria has so far given birth to a daughter only, and, as usual in such cases, the father blamed her for the child's sex, and, later on, for lack of fecundity. Now the Empress experienced rows of that kind in her own family. Her sister Calma—this is the Duchess of Glücksburg's nickname at home—had four daughters in quick succession, and every time a girl arrived at the old chateau of Grünholz her husband walked out of the house and kept away for many weeks, living meanwhile at cheap inns or with his forester, the only one he can afford. Lasting peace was established only after the birth of their fifth child, Prince Frederick. Having proved to the world that he can make a boy, the Duke forgave his wife for her daughters.

That, under the circumstances, the Kaiserin and Victoria of Hesse should be united by sympathy is but natural. In Her Majesty's own words: "All royal women should stand together to repudiate the claims of their husbands for sons. We will bear sons, God willing, but to try and intimidate us into fulfilling expectations of male issue is a barbarism that cannot be too strenuously opposed."

Duchess Calma, by the way, is the best-looking of the four Augustenburg sisters,—a very pretty woman with large blue eyes, a marvelously fine complexion of pink and white, and luxurious blonde hair. With all her child-bearing, she has retained a figure at once lithe and voluptuous.

Up to a few years ago the Glücksburgs were piteously poor, but of late have gained an unincumbered income of fifteen thousand marks per year by inheritance. On this they manage to keep a Court-marshal and a lady-in-waiting, *Herr* and *Frau* von der Recke, and an English governess, Miss Judson. Duchess Calma often stays with us during the Kaiser's long absences, and is kind and approachable, though painfully embarrassed with strangers. She has had very little education, and is not naturally bright. The same may be said of her husband, Duke Frederick, who is really little more than a good-natured dunce, subject to fits of disagreeableness. To exemplify the penury prevailing in the ducal *ménage*, I need but mention, that, when His Highness was invited to the Neues Palais in June, 1891, to fetch away his wife and little girls, he sent his regrets, excusing himself with having nothing to wear.

"The Kaiser's order, that all visiting Princes must appear in uniform," he wrote, "makes it impossible for me to comply with Your Majesty's gracious request. My uniform coat and *attila* are still in good condition, but my breeches are sadly in need of new silver braid, and I cannot afford to have them done up this year." The Duke is an officer *à la suite* of the Fourteenth Hussars.

The couple has lovely children, only a little too ethereal are these thin-limbed, narrow-chested youngsters. I have often heard them crying with hunger in the nursery, and once spoke to the Duchess about it.

"Ah," said Her Highness, "they get more here than at home. I leave it entirely to Miss Judson. When I remonstrate with her about underfeeding my little girls, she makes answer: 'I want them to be fine and English looking, not like fat German children. Those are detestable.'"

So this senseless mother, who mistrusts her own judgment in all things, allows her poor youngsters to be half starved

that a spleeny governess may have her way. To see these little Highnesses stealthily munch bread and sausage, the gift of good-hearted chamber-women and lackeys,—for they beg food of every one they catch hold of,—is one of the parodies on royalty encountered in the German Emperor's palace.

Duchess Calma and Princess Feo, the latter the youngest of the Augustenburg sisters, get most of Her Majesty's left-off dresses, state gowns as well as house and carriage toilets, all of which should go by right to the *Kammerfrau* and the ladies of the Court. Such, at least, is the custom in other royal establishments, the discarded toilets, most of them worn only once or twice, being regarded as the just perquisites of persons holding certain positions. However, when poor relatives are around, one's complimentary dues are of little account. For my part, I think Her Majesty would be less extravagant if it was not for the fact that she feels in honor bound to allow *Frau* von Haake and the Countesses Keller and Bassewitz, as well as her wardrobe-women, to occasionally choose among her less expensive old things. The funny part of it is that, according to an old-established rule, dresses given away by Her Majesty must not be worn in the palace. The dames of the Court therefore sell these garments. Not so the royal sisters. They frequently wear Her Majesty's dresses unaltered,—only shortened, made tighter, or expanded as the case demands. These alterations are made in Her Majesty's own tailor-shop, where models of their Highnesses' figures are kept, so that Calma and Feo have nothing to do but slip into a new gown as often as they like.

Princess Feo, now in her twenty-fourth year, is not a pretty girl. Unlike her other sisters, she is dark, and her face is disfigured by an uncommonly large nose. Her complexion is bad, and she looks prematurely old. Oh,

the time Her Majesty has trying to get a rich husband for this Cinderella among Lutheran Princesses! As narrated, she set out to capture the Prince of Naples for Feo, and her visits to the Quirinal and to the Pope were chiefly undertaken to smooth the way for her sister's happiness. The Savoy-Montenegro betrothal knocked all the Empress's plans into a cocked hat, and the Kaiser was so angry with poor innocent Feo that he refused to see her ever afterward.

Similar misfortune attended, for many years, Her Majesty's efforts to get her brother Günther settled. She dearly loves this good-hearted but wild *bon vivant*, whose sins against propriety she shielded more than once with her own royal person when Günther held forth in the Palais Pourtales and the air was thick with rumors of orgies held at that doubtful establishment.

At such times Her Majesty used to invite herself to breakfast at Günther's, and the announcement, duly published in the newspapers, had a tendency to stop the tongues of irreverent babblers. Surely, Her Majesty would not visit a house where dancing-girls are served for dessert on shell platters, swimming in a sauce of *eau de Cologne*, and where champagne is drunk out of slippers! Of course not! But it was rather a surprise for the royal lady to find a pair of pink corsets under a sofa cushion, inadvertently pushed aside when she was about to take the seat of honor at *dejeuner*.

The Kaiserin introduced her brother successively to two should-be brides,—the Princess Elizabeth of Mecklenburg, now married to the Hereditary Grand Duke of Oldenburg; and to that young woman's cousin, Jutta of Strelitz. The first proved "too colossal" for Günther's refined taste, and the latter too poor. Jutta, the second daughter of the Hereditary Grand Duke, was a very beautiful girl at the

time when the negotiations were pending, and her mother told me she was rather glad that the project failed, Günther being, after all, but a paltry Duke. "My daughter," said Her Highness, "will marry a *King*."

Poor Jutta! she started out in the wrong way to accomplish so noble a purpose. In the fall of 1897, her father brought her to Professor Ohlshausen, in Berlin, giving an assumed name in order to shield his rank. He said his daughter had had some strange sensations of late, and that he desired her to be thoroughly examined.

The doctor did as he was told, and after a quarter of an hour reappeared, his face wreathed in professional smiles. "I congratulate you, *Herr Baron*," he said; "if everything goes well, you will be a grandfather in about four months."

The father of Jutta's baby is a footman, named Hecht, employed at the Neu Strelitz Palace for some fifteen years. The Hereditary Grand Duke nearly killed the old scoundrel, and then sent Jutta to Italy to be confined, but with her expectations of queenship, I am afraid, it is all up.

Prospective wife number three, proposed by Her Majesty, was "little Mary" of Edinburgh, now the Princess Royal of Roumania. She visited at the Neues Palais with her mother and three sisters in June, 1892, and His Highness was enchanted with her *ingénue* ways and her beauty. Naturally, he thought she could be had for the asking by a man like him, whom the Emperor was backing, but "right here Albert Edward got in his fine work," as Günther expressed it. The Prince of Wales met the proposal by a categorical "No," and that ended the matter.

Finally, in the spring of 1897, Günther engaged himself to the only daughter of Philip of Coburg, Princess Dorothy, then a little over fifteen years of age. "She looks like a school miss, so innocent and petite," reported



the Berlin President of Police, Baron von Windheim, to Her Majesty. He had seen the young lady at a dinner given in her and Duke Günther's honor by our Paris Ambassador, in May last. Others who attended the banquet say the Jewish blood of the Koharys is perceptible in her features, and to no great advantage, either.

While Count Münster's guests were listening to a concert, Princess Dorothy was rolling on the floor with a couple of big hounds, displaying her fine hosiery and snowy linen.

## CHAPTER X

The Emperor hates family ties ; he is always at war with his mother, sometimes with Prince Henry and his sisters Charlotte and Sophie, and looks upon the rest of his relatives with supreme indifference, as a big Newfoundland does upon the small fry of the canine race. And as that seemingly good-natured but *au fond* knavish quadruped allows pretty toy dogs to play with him and pull him about, so does the Kaiser engage in familiar intercourse, off and on, with Duchess Calma, with Her Highness's children, Duke Günther, and brother-in-law Adolph of Lippe ; but as to Her Majesty's mother and Princess Feo, he loathes them, the first because she is "*meschugge*," as he expresses himself in the Berlin vernacular, and the other because of her presumptiveness.

In former years, Princess Feo visited at the palace during the Kaiser's presence there, but now he keeps both her and her mother at a distance when at home. To the Duchess Adelaide His Majesty has been at home only on two occasions,—at the wedding of her third daughter, Louise Sophie, to Prince Frederick Leopold, and after Her Royal Highness's first confinement, in 1890. Frederick Leopold, by the way, has never permitted the Duchess to cross the threshold of Klein-Glienecke. This amiable son-in-law divides womanhood into classes. When Countess Fritz was hand and glove with the Emperor, he designated her *the* woman of the first class ; his wife, who is not pretty,

and dresses in execrable taste, he calls a woman of the second class; of his wife's ladies, Grand-mistress Countess Konigsmarck, *Mademoiselle* von Wurmb, and *Mademoiselle* von Oertzen, he speaks as third-class females, if he does not collectively call them his harem. "Louise's mother," he says, "belongs to the seventh class,—*die böse Sieben*."

The Duchess and Princess Feo live in Reichenbach Strasse, Dresden; a Colonel von Schlanberg is their Court-marshal, and a *Fräulein* von Roeder acts as *Hofdame*. The Colonel's chief duty is to repudiate extravagant contracts made by Her Highness with purveyors and other people. Once he found the house swarming with servants clad in all sorts of liveries, new, old, and in tatters. Twenty-five stalwart men lined the staircase from vestibule to the top of the house.

"What does this mean?" inquired the Major-domo.

"Her Highness escaped yesterday when on a visit to Countess X. Y., hired a *Droschke*, and drove to all the employment agencies, where she engaged the best-looking fellows she could find. Forty have so far reported, and were sent into the saddle-room, there to pick up what they might in the way of liveries."

"But what are those fellows doing on the stairs?" demanded the Colonel.

"They are placed there by Her Highness's special orders. She expects to receive a Court train from Her Majesty to-day, and proposes to sweep down in great gala when dressed up."

This escapade cost the ducal *ménage* some thousands of marks, for the people had all been regularly engaged by the year, and were consequently entitled to compensation for wages and board-money.

The *contretemps* happened just before Christmas, 1892, when the Duchess had asked the Kaiserin for a mantle of

purple velvet, embroidered in the arms of the Holsteins and the Hohenlohes. As a general thing, the Empress is exceedingly kind to her mother, but she refused this request point blank. "If Her Highness owned such a garment, she might take it into her head to surprise us at some state function, asking to be allowed to participate in the procession," she said to Countess Brockdorff. "I cannot entertain this demand, much as I would like to oblige my mother. The Emperor would never forgive me."

Her Highness annually spends from two to three months at the Neues Palais or Schloss. She comes for one, two, or three weeks at a time, and stays as long as her condition permits. Her peculiar dementia is the wash craze, not a craze for cleanliness,—for she would as soon jump into the fire as immerse herself in a tub of water,—but a passion for washing herself, for engaging in the physical exertion of wetting different parts of her body and rubbing them down.

"I have brought my daily ablutions into a system," she told me as long as eight or nine years ago, with glowing eyes, "and to that end divided my body into twenty-one hemispheres" (meaning sections). "The cleansing of each one of them requires a complete toilet-set,—bowl, pitcher, soap-dish, and towel."

That is one of the reasons why Her Highness's visits are so much dreaded in the palace. I have already spoken about the inadequacy of the supply of certain requisites at our Court. Now imagine one guest of perhaps a dozen or more demanding half a store full of toilet-sets for her use alone. Our Court-marshal groans and the House-marshals and chamber-maids swear when the Duchess of Schleswig is announced. Baron Lyncker and *Herr* von Egloffstein have to "find" the *lavoirs*; that is, they must borrow what is needed from the royal porcelain factory, and the girls have to provide the oceans of water.

The different wash-sets are placed on a succession of tables, covered with linen, and the parquet under and in front of the impromptu stands is laid with floor-cloth. But despite these precautions, the indefatigable *blanchicheuse* has spoiled the inlaid floors, some of them hundreds of years old and extremely beautiful in design, in some dozen apartments. That, under the circumstances, the House-marshals are desirous of lodging Her Highness in rooms where hard usage is of little account is natural, but Her Majesty will not hear of it. The last time such discrimination was attempted, *Herr* von Lyncker nearly lost his head over the matter. It happened in June, 1890, when, His Majesty being at home, the Duchess was to reside in the Stadt Schloss.

A few hours before her mother's arrival, the Empress went to inspect the rooms prepared for *Madame Mère*, and found them "*pauvre* and unsuitable." Baron Lyncker was ordered up.

"Am I to understand that these are the rooms for Her Highness?"

"Yes, at Your Majesty's orders."

"Then send for an Almanach de Gotha and find out who Her Highness is."

Lyncker trembled with rage. "I fully recognize the obligations of homage due to Your Majesty's mother," he said, "but inasmuch as Her Highness uses her rooms merely to amuse herself in the manner we all know——" *Herr* von Lyncker did not get further. My mistress smashed the Dresden head of her sunshade on the table before her. "The best suite of rooms in the house, barring my own, is at once to be prepared!" she cried, "and you"—looking at the House-marshal—"will go with Countess Eppinghofen to the Neues Palais and take from my own rooms the articles of decoration Her Ladyship

will designate. These must be conveyed hither in the shortest possible order and must be forthwith employed to beautify the state apartments. I myself will conduct Her Highness to her rooms to-night and see whether my commands have been carried out."

Since then Her Highness is permitted to ravage our palaces *ad libitum*, and the more she destroys, the merrier: "*La duchesse s'amuse.*"

As soon as she arrives at her chambers, the Duchess has each pitcher, bowl, and soap-dish numbered according to a schedule she carries around everywhere and guards as a treasure. Number one is for her right foot, number four for her left hip, number seven for her right bosom, etc., the even numbers for the left, the uneven for the right side of her body. And woe to the chamber-maid who upsets this order of things by placing a left-sided bowl with a right-sided pitcher, which may happen easily enough, seeing that the majority of *lavoirs* are of the same color and pattern.

On the occasion mentioned, Her Majesty had given orders that only fourteen toilet-sets be placed in Her Highness's apartments, somebody having told her that her mother might be altogether weaned of her craze if once she could be persuaded to get along with less than the accustomed number of utensils.

Mother and daughter inspected the rooms together and afterward took dinner in private, Her Highness withdrawing at an early hour on the plea of indisposition. In truth, she burned to see whether her first casual observation as to the lack of wash-basins had been correct. *Fräulein* von Roeder said next day that the Duchess, as soon as she was out of Her Majesty's sight, began to run, arriving at her apartment breathless and excited.

"Help me count,—all of you!" she shrieked. The china sets were counted once, they were counted twice;

one-third of the prescribed number "was noticeable by its absence," as the Germans say.

Duchess Adelaide clutched at her hair. "Whose work is this?" she cried; "I have had twenty-one bowls and pitchers as long as I can think, and my daughter would be the last person in the world to deprive me of comfort. Who took the *lavoirs* away?" and she was about to throw herself upon the maids, who were ready to prepare her for bed. At that moment a happy thought occurred to Roeder. "The Schloss is full to overflowing with royalties, as Your Highness knows," she said; "probably the Court-marshal, running short of stock, took some of our china away."

Curiously enough, *Madame Mère* accepted this explanation, and promised to behave, if her four maids, *Fräulein* von Roeder, her daughter Feo, and the maid of the Princess would lend their *lavoirs* for the night. Next morning she ordered two landaus from the *Marstall*, and sent her *Hofdame* and her dresser to town to buy more toilet-sets.

"If my son-in-law," she said, "is too poor to provide for his guests, they must try and augment the shortcomings of his *ménage*," adding, disgustedly: "and *that* calls himself an Emperor!"

"As Her Highness pronounced these words, she threw her sponge into bowl number eleven," reports Roeder, who also volunteers some interesting information respecting the section of the Duchess's anatomy labelled XI.

The *lavoirs* purchased, seven of them, were smuggled into Her Highness's apartment in paper boxes to hoodwink the servants, and were then placed in Princess Feo's and *Fräulein* von Roeder's rooms, so the Empress might not see them when she paid her daily visits to *Madame Mère*.

Duchess Adelaide indulges in the wash craze twice daily, before second breakfast and after supper; sometimes, on her "critical days," she rises as early as half-past four to commence operations. When staying with us at the Neues Palais in the fall of 1893, the mania seized her one fine morning at 5 A.M. She jumped out of bed and, without taking time to put on even a petticoat, ran into the corridor, shouting for the girls to bring water. The noise awoke Princess Feo and *Fräulein* von Roeder, who endeavored to persuade Her Highness to come back to bed, but the old woman turned upon them with a flood of invectives that would have done honor to a fish-wife. When, finally, the overseer of the corridor arrived, he found three half-naked women engaged in a fierce battle, the two younger ones trying to force the other to re-enter the apartment, while she clamored for hot water at the top of her voice. "Water, water, I am dying for water! Only nine pitchers are filled! Give me twelve pitchers of hot water!"

In the Empress's room conversation once turned upon the subject of complexions. "To what, do you think, does Feo ascribe her muddled skin?" asked the Duchess in her usual blunt manner, and all of us began to look sharply to our needle-work. Her Highness repeated the question, and then answered it herself: "Because," she grinned—"*nota bene*, that is Feo's explanation—because I won't let her sleep at night, and awaken her early in the morning. Now I should like to know whether I am not entitled to my daughter's company while engaged in my toilet? Roeder and the girls have to sit up while I wash, but Feo is allowed to go to bed, or remain abed, where I visit her from time to time for a snatch of talk. I mean to entertain her, as well as myself, and this ungrateful child says I am muddling her complexion."



Physicians have diagnosed Her Highness's craze as a morbid craving to smooth down certain nerve centres which are subject to periodical irritation. The rubbings and ablutions seem to soothe them into a restful condition. When all the twenty-one "hemispheres" have been attended to, Her Highness feels quite well until the second wash act is about due. "But the worst of it is," says Colonel von Schlanberg, accountant of the ducal finances, "Her Highness uses almost as great a quantity of toilet vinegars and other preparations as water. Last year her bills for soap and cosmetics and the like exceeded Princess Feo's dress-making and millinery accounts, though all the stuffs are bought *en gros*."

If for some physical or mental reasons the ablutions fail to quiet Her Highness, she has paroxysms of rage that seriously threaten her surroundings. Then she smashes furniture, howls like mad, and falls upon her maids if she gets the chance. As a rule, though, her girls are selected with a view to bodily strength, and it has been asserted that they give tit for tat whenever their mistress essays to throttle or otherwise maltreat them. It would not be the first time that a royal lunatic was subjected to violence. George III of England was soundly thrashed by his valet, whenever, during his intermittent fits of lunacy, the latter got a chance to even up things. For every fisticuff the man had got when his master was in seeming possession of his senses, he kicked George thrice when the latter was strait-jacketed. Such is human nature.

In the spring of 1894 Her Highness brought in her retinue two newly-engaged maids; they were to do night service for the first time at the Neues Palais, while another set had to attend Her Highness's morning wash. Whether these girls had not been properly prepared for the ordeal awaiting them, or, lacking instructions, performed their

work badly, or whether they were timid by nature, I do not know; at any rate, there was an awful rumpus toward twelve o'clock in the part of the palace where the Duchess lodged, and next morning it was learned that the girls had run from the building, never stopping until commanded to do so on pain of death by the sentinels in the *Sandhof*. Then they threw themselves upon their knees, and screamed for mercy. The poor creatures thought they were in a Bedlam: the royal lady, their mistress, finding herself short one pitcher of water, had suddenly metamorphosed into a fiend incarnate, had assailed them with biting and scratching and throttling, and now that they had gained the open, two shining barrels were pushed into their faces, with the command: "Stand still, or I will shoot!" This episode meant another onslaught on poor Colonel von Schlanberg's slender treasury.

When the Kaiser heard of this scandal, he placed his mother-in-law in an asylum at Gratz, where she was kept for four or five months; then they discharged her as incurable. The managers did not care to keep the Duchess, particularly as she backed up every unreasonable demand of hers by a threat to commit suicide and ruin the institution. Her *Hofdame*, *Fräulein* von Roeder, alone knew how to manage her when in the mood for self-destruction. She is a very energetic woman, strong-minded and strong-limbed, and capable of enforcing His Majesty's orders at all hazards. Once when Duchess Adelaide expressed a desire to have her groom in the parlor, Roeder replied with her usual "No, thank you."

"But I will have Johann in the *salon*, or anywhere else, if I see fit. Am I not the Duchess of Schleswig-Holstein?"

"I know," answered Roeder, doggedly, "but that notwithstanding, Your Highness will not entertain a hostler here,—not till the Mur runs up the Schlossberg."

"You impertinent cat!" cried the Duchess. "You think you can give me the end of your tongue because that son-in-law of mine, the Emperor, encourages you." At the same time she carried a chair to the window, opened it, and placing one foot on the sill, added: "*Now* will you let me have Johann?"

"Why *now*?" asked Roeder, innocently.

"Because, unless you ring for him at once, I will jump out."

Roeder never quivered. Nonchalantly waving her hand toward the window, she said: "Jump, Your Highness, and I will enjoy a long holiday. I will have my salary for life, you know." Her Highness did jump, but onto the floor. "Damn you," she hissed, "I would rather live forever than do you a good turn!"

Besides water, soap, and toilet vinegars, the unhappy Duchess—a lady of sixty-three, by the way—has men on the brain. Her former cavalier, now Court-marshal to Duke Günther, *Herr* von Gutzmerow, had to be removed from her presence because he wished to remain constant to his wife. Shortly after Colonel von Schlanberg's appointment, the Duchess came to Potsdam to exhibit "her new treasure," as she called him. Schlanberg is not an Adonis, and considerable time has passed since he celebrated his fiftieth birthday; but that notwithstanding, Her Highness tried her level best to compromise herself and him. She was forever talking of the Colonel, casting longing glances at his manly form, and persecuted the old warrior with little attentions that made us all blush. One afternoon, at the Neues Palais, she ordered him to follow her for a stroll in the park, and, going ahead, took the carriage road, newly laid with loose yellow sand. As she proceeded, she raised her skirts higher and higher, looking around every few seconds to watch the impression her

royal calves made on the Colonel. The gentleman was in despair. There was a sentinel walking up and down in front of the palace, and half a dozen servants lounged about the terrace, while Her Majesty and suite stood at the windows of the billiard-room. "Your Highness," he was heard to cry, "you are exerting yourself unnecessarily. If you will but step a little to the right, you will find a hard road."

Instead of following this advice, the Duchess rustled her skirts and giggled. Now the Colonel sprang to her side. "May I offer you my arm?"

"The privilege is granted, *von ganzem Herzen*," lisped Duchess Adelaide, sweetly; "don't you think I have a mighty good figure for an old one?"

As the Duchess, on the two state occasions mentioned, made unspeakable assaults upon her male neighbors at table, she is now excluded from the royal board. She dines *à deux* with her *Hofdame*, unless the Kaiserin admits her to second breakfast, or supper, when only a few good friends, or no gentlemen at all, are present. Then she sits between Her Majesty and Countess Brockdorff, or Countess Eulenburg, who make her behave by alternately keeping one hand on her knee to remind her of bodily restraint; but even then she breaks loose at times, smashes the table with her fist that the plates and glasses dance about, and swears like a trooper. One of her favorite expressions is: "*der verfluchte Schweinehund*," and she applies it indiscriminately to Pope or Kaiser, hostler or Court-marshal. Of women, she usually speaks as "*die alte Hure*." Even the Duchess of Orleans was more polite. She never went further than to call Madame Montesperan "*die alte Zottel*."

At the same time the Duchess is capable of treating persons of the serving-classes with the utmost deference. Once,

while Her Majesty was in her room at the Stadt Schloss, the *friseuse*, *Frau Moeller*, came to dress Her Highness's hair. The Duchess at once jumped up. "My dear," she said, kissing the astonished woman on both cheeks and fondling her, "I am so glad you have come. I believe I had the honor of meeting you at the Empress Eugenie's in Paris before those confounded Prussians drove her from her throne as they did my husband."

The Empress did not know what to do. "Mother," she cried, "this is my wardrobe-woman, not the Princess you imagine her to be, though I admit the likeness is striking." The Duchess would not listen. She walked at Moeller's side, bowing and scraping and uttering the most highfaluting language imaginable, until, finally, Auguste Victoria, taking her mother by the shoulders, fairly threw her into a *fauteuil* and rolled this to the toilet-table, where Moeller, without a word, commenced her work.

Her Highness's dementia antedates her husband's death, which occurred in the beginning of 1880. Stories that she was queer had found their way to Berlin years before, and when their present Majesties' betrothal was celebrated at Babelsberg, June 2, 1880, it was found necessary to exclude *Madame Mère* from the banquet. Bismarck, having refused to interfere while it was yet time, now advised that no attention whatever be paid to the matter, a decision which reminds one of the statesmanship of the advisers of the first Tudor, Henry VII. These endeavored to get the King to marry the mad Juana of Spain, even after she was incarcerated at the castle of Tordesillas, pleading that, sane or insane, she was capable of bearing children. Auguste Victoria's mother was clearly going crazy, everybody could see that; but as the prospective bride promised to be a good "Holstein," perish the thought of consequences to her offspring!

In the summer of 1886, when Her Highness was a guest of the then Princess William, at the Marble Palace, her condition first threatened to become a public scandal. I have the following from a member of the princely household.

The Duchess, it appears, had plagued her daughter so long for an opportunity to show off her skill as an Amazon that Auguste Victoria at last consented to take her riding. The hour was set for eleven o'clock next day, and Her Highness faithfully promised to get through with her washings by that time.

At eleven sharp the little cavalcade assembled before the chateau; only *Madame Mère's* Arab, which she herself had selected at the Berlin *Marstall*, remained idle. After fifteen minutes, Her Royal Highness sent word to her mother that she was waiting, a message which was repeated in stronger and stronger terms time and again. Finally, at the stroke of twelve, just as Princess William was about to canter off, they heard a mighty ado on the grand staircase,—the Duchess came rushing down. Without a word, she threw herself across her horse, one leg here, the other there, her skirt tucked up in front and behind; driving the spur into the stallion's side, she galloped off, *plain chasse*, before any one could say "*Mein Gott!*" Past the embankments of Heiligen-See, and through the woods of *Neuer Garten* raced the wild huntswoman, yelling like a Comanche, using whip and spur freely while encircling the horse's belly with her legs. At first, Princess William and her suite tried to follow, but soon gave it up as a bad job; Riding-master Hellwigh alone persisted in the chase, his long-legged hunter bringing him into hailing distance of Her Highness at Glienecke *Brücke*; but the man had no sooner opened his mouth than Duchess Adelaide recommended him to a warmer climate. She kept it up until

her horse was exhausted, and then rode back to the stables, complaining of her miserable foam and blood covered mount.

The presumption, so frequently heard, that the imperial couple and Empress Frederick cannot agree because of the latter's one-sided love of things English, is on a par with hundreds of inventions dealing with the Prussian Court of to-day,—inventions out of Mother Idleness, sired by Ignorance. As a matter of fact, the widow of the gallant Frederick is not half as prejudiced in favor of England as her enemies like to make out. If she were, why should she live in Germany, live there permanently, year in, year out?

I have known Kaiserin Victoria for twenty years and never heard her utter a word of English. She prefers to use German even in her correspondence, and, what is still more remarkable, employs the doomed German script. She patronizes German industries, loves German art, and surrounds herself with Germans. The Kaiser, on the other hand, cannot conceal his English proclivities, much as he loves to air Anglophobian views for political reasons. He seizes every opportunity for speaking and writing English, and forces his adjutants and courtiers to learn English, no matter at what age they enter his personal service. *Herr* von Egloffstein was far removed from youth when he became one of our House-marshals three or more years ago, but continues to study his Lindley Murray to this day.

If possible, the Empress is a more enthusiastic believer in everything English than William; the whole faculty of native midwives and nurses (not an inconsiderable body in our country) looks down upon Her Majesty as a traitress to German womanhood for employing English *accoucheuses* and nursery-maids; but she persists, braving the Charybdis of unpopularity. The imperial children learn English first and German afterward. Her Majesty

never speaks a word of German with them until they are five years old. When either of the children's birthday occurs during her absence, she sends her congratulations in English. Most of their clothes come from England, and their pony and donkey carts are made in Great Britain. Is it to be wondered at when the children indulge in such remarks as: "It would be queer if these stockings were of fast color; they are of German manufacture"? Once, when Court-chaplain Frommel admired their hosiery, the Crown Prince and Eitel Fritz expressed themselves in that surprising style.

Taking all in all, it is quite evident that the lack of sympathy between the two Empresses had its origin in other causes than those popularly assigned. Upon one I have already touched. The Crown Princess and Empress could never quite forget "that girl's impudence;" you will remember the epithets she applied to her daughter-in-law when the latter was on her first visit to the Neues Palais.

Then, as afterward, the Augustenburger was warned to mend her ways toward Her Imperial Highness. She refused to do so; she would rather make a Brockdorff her *confidante*, and invite a Waldersee to be her governess, than submit to the higher intellect of her husband's parent.

In all these years, Auguste Victoria has never loved, has sometimes fought, and has always feared her mother-in-law. There are people who assert that the similarity of their characters is one of the chief reasons for the strained relations between Kaiserin Frederick and her son. Both are too conscious of their worth and dignity, too pig-headed, too prejudiced, too much wedded to the "no surrender" policy, to come to an understanding, now that their old differences are well-nigh history.

"Knowing both her husband's and her mother-in-law's weaknesses, Auguste Victoria ought to have intermediated,



or, that failing, ought to have done her part toward bringing about and preserving amicable relations between the Neues Palais and Friedrichshof on her own account," say the true friends of the relatives-at-war. But she did nothing of the kind. In those awful days of June, 1888, when the new Kaiser, attended by the madman Normann, exploited his cruel egotism at his father's death-bed, when he made his mother and his sisters *quasi* prisoners of state until his search for an imaginary secret testament was completed (England cheated a Prussian Majesty out of an inheritance once,<sup>1</sup> why not again?)—from 9 A.M., on June 15, until after Frederick's funeral—Auguste Victoria renounced her rights of wife and mother altogether; before William's deeds of unprecedented barbarity she relinquished even her womanly feelings.

If ever wife and mother ought to have stood up for another wife and mother; if ever woman ought to have thrown the halo of womanly love around another,—that was the time! What did Auguste Victoria do? She sent expressions of the deepest regret, and said she would come to Friedrichskron as soon as her crape gown was ready.

Meanwhile, William had declared the property rights of all the people in the palace—*his* palace—forfeited for the time being; as the feudal lord of old seized a bondsman's personal estate while the body was yet warm, so had the presence of death—a father's waxen face—no restraining influence over the new master. The late Emperor's, his wife's and daughter's writing-desks, their strong boxes, trinket-boxes, bedrooms, and boudoirs, were submitted to a rigid examination before the owners were allowed access

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<sup>1</sup> The Hanoverian joint heritages, the Princess of Ahlden Allodia, about 1729. Frederick William I, at that time, challenged George II to the famous duel that never came off.

again. And in the midst of the rumpus a four-horse coach brought the new Empress!

Kaiserin Frederick had no patience to hear Auguste Victoria declaim. "Send Brockdorff away," she said, curtly. And then the proud old woman unbent enough to ask, nay, implore, her daughter-in-law to stop William's ravings. "By all that is holy to you," she is said to have exclaimed, "stop that man from desecrating my home and my noble dead. I have appealed to his love, to his sense of decency, to his manliness. It is your turn now. Talk to him with the authority of a wife and mother. He must listen to you. And unless you expect to be treated by *your* sons as I have been treated by my son during the last two hours,—restrain him, re-establish me as mistress within my own walls, and I will be forever grateful to you."

Auguste Victoria went into the library, and returned after a few moments, her face flushed and trembling. "I can do nothing," she faltered out; "'Willie' is here as Emperor, and I cannot interfere with his official business."

"Then have the goodness to go back to your Marble Palace and play with your children," cried the widowed Empress, hotly.

And the hostilities were reopened. In the interval occasioned by the new Kaiserin's reception, William had informed his mother's officials and servants that he was their master now and that they must obey no one's orders but his own. Thereupon the old Empress:

"Whoever refuses to carry out any of my commands promptly and willingly, will be instantly dismissed and forfeits his rights to pension."

Victoria had furnished her Court-marshal with a list of persons who were to be admitted to the house in order that they might have a last look at her dead hero. Only

Frederick's personal and political friends were on the list, but William tore it up, and ordered his sentinels to admit all high army officers who called.

Have ever such scenes occurred in the presence of death? The new lord's "drill-ground tenor" cutting short the impassioned speech of an outraged wife and distracted mother! Entreaties, appeals, threats, on the one side; cold indifference, scorn, sneering references to the *status quo*, on the other.

There has been no peace between the reigning Hohenzollerns and the proud Guelph mother, shorn of power, since. A resemblance of familiar intercourse was kept up as long as the Empress Augusta lived, but since her death the Kaiser's enmity to his mother has become a matter of political significance. German statesmen trim their sails according to its fluctuations, and those of Great Britain follow suit.

The Empress Frederick and Auguste Victoria had one more momentous meeting since that of June 15; namely, in the fall of the same year, when the negotiations for the Dowager Kaiserin's removal from Castle Friedrichskron were pending. The older woman strenuously opposed her son's claims to the property, first because she herself desired to retain the house where she had lived so long, and, secondly, because she feared William would ruin himself in the possession of this castle, whose vastness and splendor offer particular temptations for establishing a Court out of all proportions to the Kaiser's revenues. However, the "Augustenburger" would not see it in that light. As a matter of fact, she was as eager to branch out *à la* Versailles as her husband. After three months of widowhood, Empress Frederick left Friedrichskron. She was crying bitterly as she went through the park and halls, taking leave of everything and everybody. "Here I have spent

the most beautiful days of my married life, and afterward endured the awfulest hours woman can endure," she remarked to General von Lindequist, then commander of Potsdam. To the officials and servants, each of whom, high and low, she shook by the hand, she said: "If you ever want to see your old mistress again, you must come to Berlin, where I will make you welcome with pleasure. May palsy strike my foot if ever I thrust it over this threshold again."

As was to be expected from a woman of Her Majesty's character, she has kept her word. Occasional *quasi* enforced visits between their Majesties and Empress Frederick take place on neutral grounds. The Dowager Kaiserin receives her son and daughter-in-law in the manor-house of the farm Bornstädt, a mile or so from the Neues Palais, and next day they repair to the Marble Palace or Stadt Schloss to give Her Majesty an opportunity to return the compliment. Empress Frederick is very seldom in Berlin, and has always an excuse ready for declining invitations to official or private festivities held at her son's Court. Even when she lives Under den Linden at Christmas-time, she foregoes the pleasure of seeing the children. She has been too sorely wounded to forget and forgive. After the scenes at Frederick's death-bed, she was driven forth from her home, and this insult was quickly followed by another, aimed at her dead husband.

William and Auguste Victoria took possession of Friedrichskron in May, 1889; a few weeks later this name, which Frederick III had conferred upon the Schloss, was abolished by royal decree and the old, meaningless Neues Palais reinstated. I remember it well. All of a sudden officers of the Court-marshal's office called on the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, demanding us to hand over every scrap of stationery stamped Friedrichskron. The

confiscated stuff was burned, and we were left without writing-paper for a full week. Her Majesty herself had to write her letters on ordinary blue-lined sheets, bought in a penny store, as she would not use the official foolscap.

A third and fourth cause of chagrin to Empress Frederick was the Kaiser's treatment of his brother and sister. Prince Henry was to have had the Villa Carlotta in Sans Souci Park, which is Crown property, for a summer home, but the Kaiser gave the house and beautiful gardens to Baron von Lyncker. Next he turned the Meiningens out of their Thiergarten villa, which Emperor Frederick had rented for his daughter and son-in-law with the understanding that the Minister of the royal house pay the rent as long as the Meiningens cared to remain. William no sooner learned of this arrangement when he repudiated it. "I pay the Meiningens' rent? Not for a day, not for an hour," and the landlord was at once notified that, after the expiration of the lease, at the end of three months, he would receive no more money from the royal treasury. The Meiningens have since lived away from Berlin.

Empress Frederick's latest quarrel with her daughter-in-law dates from the summer of 1891, when Auguste Victoria decided to go to Felixstowe with her children and a suite of fifty persons, and, to secure more spending-money, authorized Court-marshal von Eulenburg to deprive the servants of their allowance of butter for first breakfast and for supper. The Kaiser's *ménage* never allows butter for second breakfast. Now it happened that the servants transferred from Empress Frederick's Court to that of the present Kaiser and Kaiserin were among the first to petition for redress. *Ergo* the cry of Empress Frederick's enemies, that "the Britisher" was at the bottom of the revolt.

"I knew nothing about these petty quarrels," said the Dowager Kaiserin, some time afterward, to Countess

Wilhelm Hohenau, "but I certainly think that this latest makeshift was most disgraceful. Depriving a servant of his butter is as bad as selling a dead man's false teeth."

Though the strong-minded English woman is noted for her outspoken criticisms, this remark, aimed directly at Auguste Victoria and coming to her ears in the quickest possible way, created first consternation and later on a demand for reprisals. Since it acquired publicity, it has become a virtue at Court to call the Empress Frederick names.

As mentioned in another place, the liberally-governed German is permitted to designate Frederick William IV an ass,—not a "confounded ass" or a "mouse-colored ass," merely an ass, no more, no less,—but with respect to black-guarding the dowager, there is no limit whatever. She is a "traitress," of course, and "hands over German state secrets to her mother every morning for breakfast." "All the English and American newspapers that make fun of the Kaiser are in her pay,"—certainly. "She tries to establish the London Sabbath in Berlin," "writes letters to Queen Louise of Denmark," and "conspires with her brother," the Prince of Wales.

But these are accusations of minor moment. Here follows the heavy artillery :

"She married off all her daughters, irrespective of their future happiness, just to get rid of them," and as to her love for Frederick, "that was all put on." Else, why was this "Seckendorff always hanging around her"? When she was in Berlin, "he was lodged in the *Prinzessinnen-Palais*, which, by a covered archway, connects with Her Majesty's *salon*, so this cavalier could go to his mistress unseen at all hours." If she was staying in Potsdam, "he had his rooms as near as possible to the Empress's." In short, "this titled John Brown attended and attends her at

all times, and is now a regular inmate of the dowager's household."

Of course he did, and of course he is. After acting as Her Majesty's private secretary for many years, His Excellency now holds the post of chamberlain and chief Court-marshal at Friedrichshof. The one position like the other, made and makes Seckendorff's presence in the sovereign lady's immediate *entourage* necessary.

"But," continue the know-alls, "the relations of the couple are of the most intimate character; they could hardly be more intimate." Fiddlesticks! I would like to see the somebody to whom a woman like the Empress Frederick has given cause for just criticism of that sort. Besides, Seckendorff is not a young man. He has seen fifty-six, and is not a person calculated to attract by any special gifts of amiability. He is of a fitful temper.

"Correct," shout the irrepressible know-alls. "When Seckendorff is mad, Her Majesty is, and when Seckendorff is jolly, the Empress tries to make everybody around her happy."

At the beginning of 1898, Empress Frederick was spoken of as a "second Marie-Louise, who had forgotten her hero-husband." It was openly asserted at the palace that she married Seckendorff. I doubt that there is anything in this story. If true, Her Majesty would make a clean breast of it, I think. She is not the woman to be swayed by prejudices or cowed by possible fault-finding.

And now let us get to the bottom of the enmity between mother and son and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

On April 10, 1888, just one month after the reign of ninety-nine days had begun, Empress Victoria—the official designation "Empress Frederick" was conferred upon Her Majesty *after* William's accession—on that day Empress

Victoria drove from Castle Charlottenburg to the Berlin Schloss, having previously ordered Prince Bismarck to meet her. Then and there the Kaiserin informed the Chancellor that Frederick had decided not to leave her (in the event of his death) to the tender mercies of her son.

"Cherishing no illusions with respect to William's sense of justice, or to his *chevaleresque* qualities," said Her Majesty, "the Emperor orders that seventy-five per cent. of my portion, as well as the dowries of my unmarried daughters and all my daughters' shares in our property, be paid by the Crown treasury now, while the rest is to be held at our disposal, to be paid over the moment my husband dies, and before the new Emperor assumes control of the funds and revenues."

Bismarck was dumfounded.

"Here are the Kaiser's orders, signed and countersigned and sealed. And," added the Empress, "His Majesty enjoins Your Grace and all the persons taking official cognizance of this act to the greatest secrecy. I have your word, Prince?"

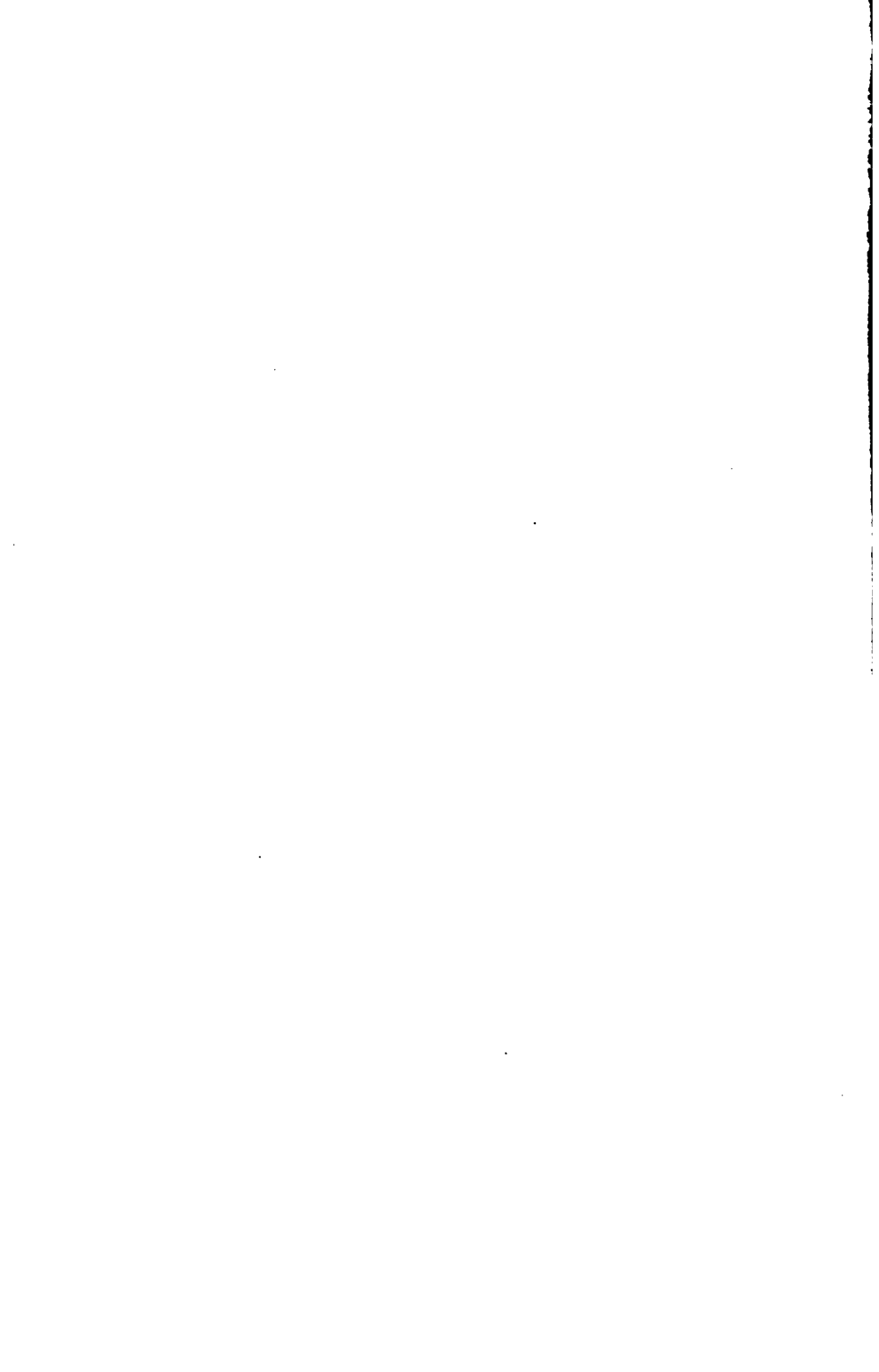
"You have, Your Majesty."

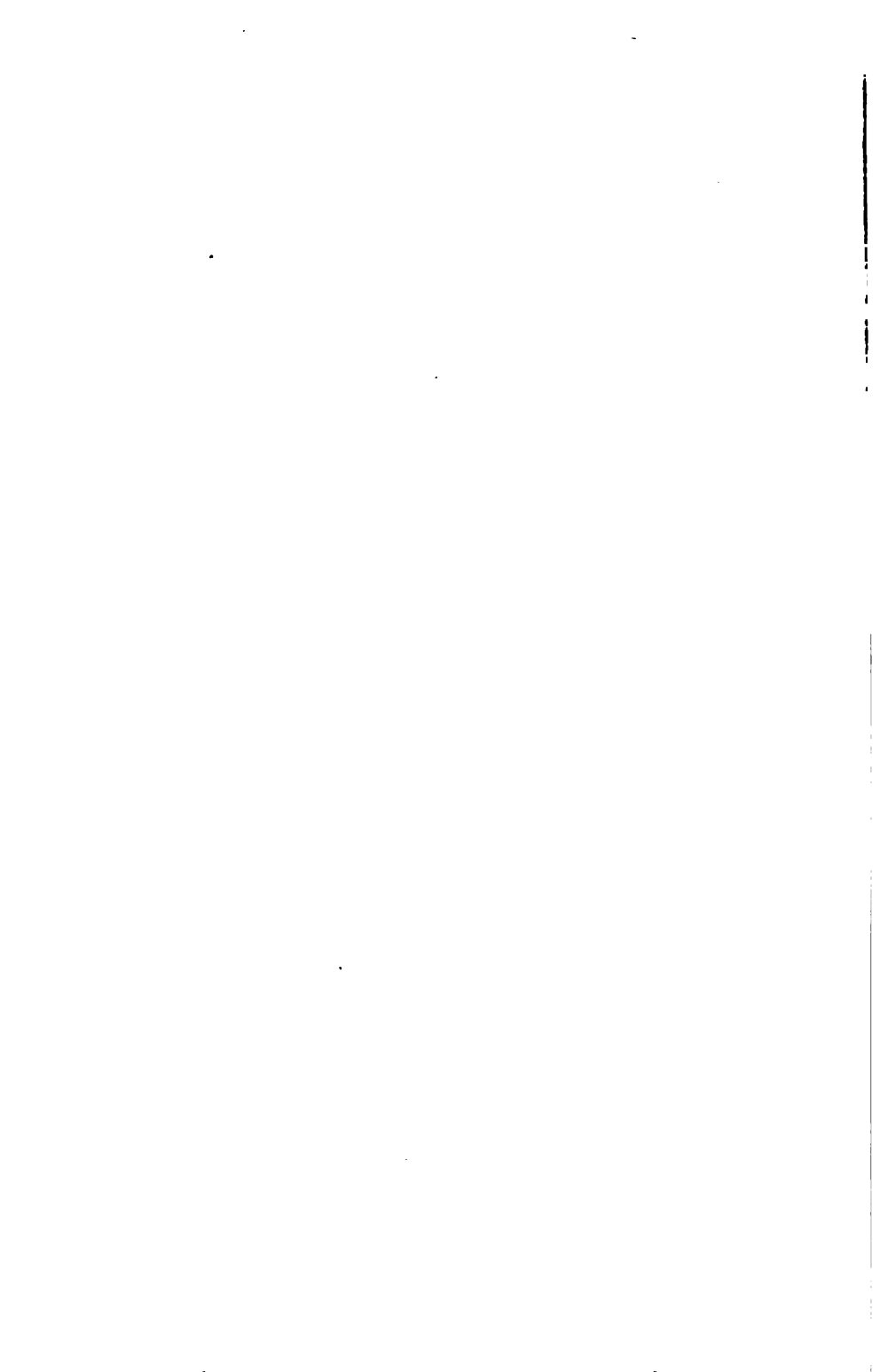
Of this arrangement William never heard a breath until the morning of June 15.

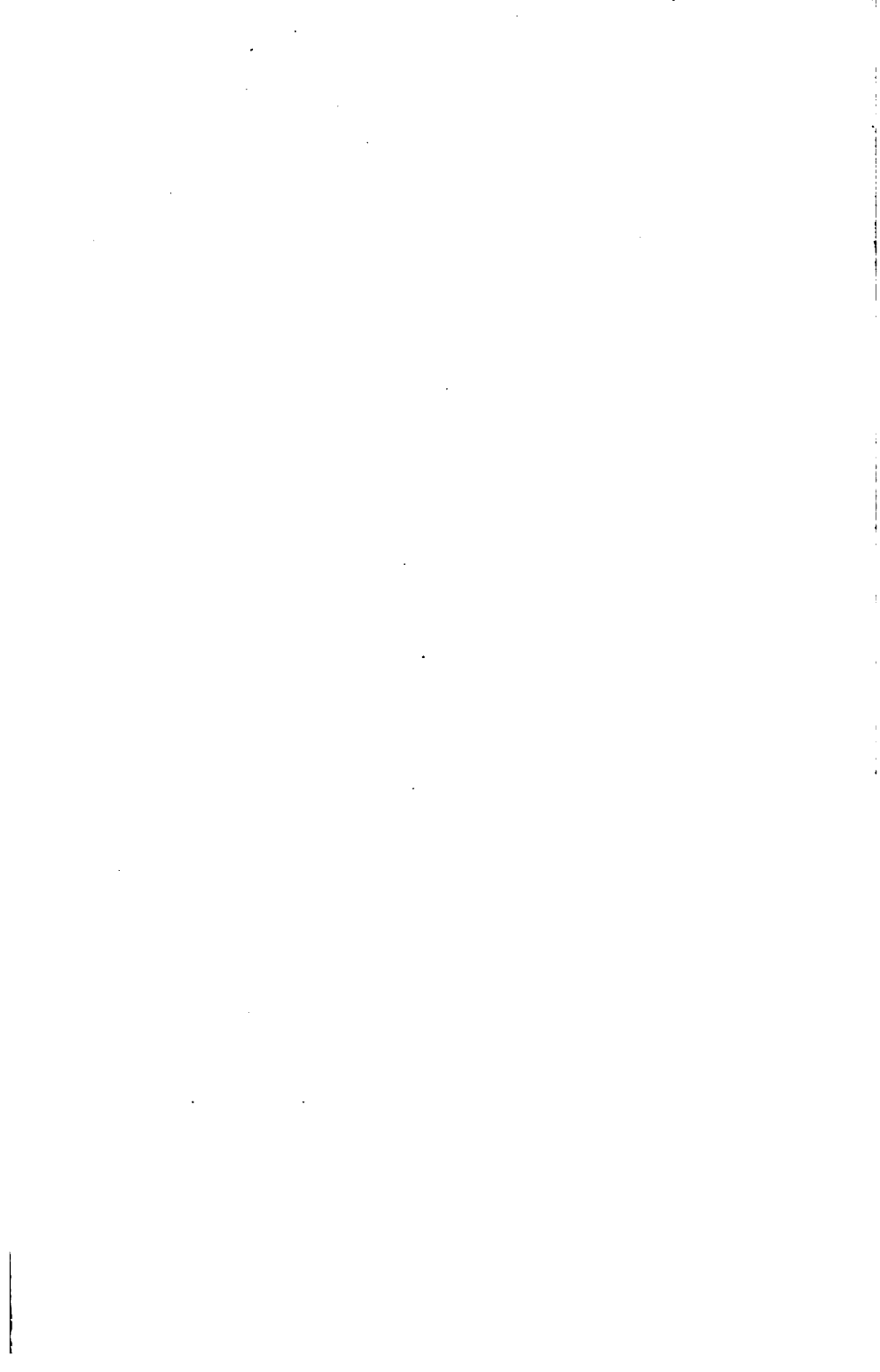
Those who followed the events preceding Bismarck's dismissal will remember that the Chancellor, before submitting to the Kaiser's request for his resignation, went to the Empress Frederick to ask her intercession. At that momentous interview he reminded Her Majesty of the service rendered her two years before. But the Empress merely shook her head: "It is *that* which stands forever between me and my son."





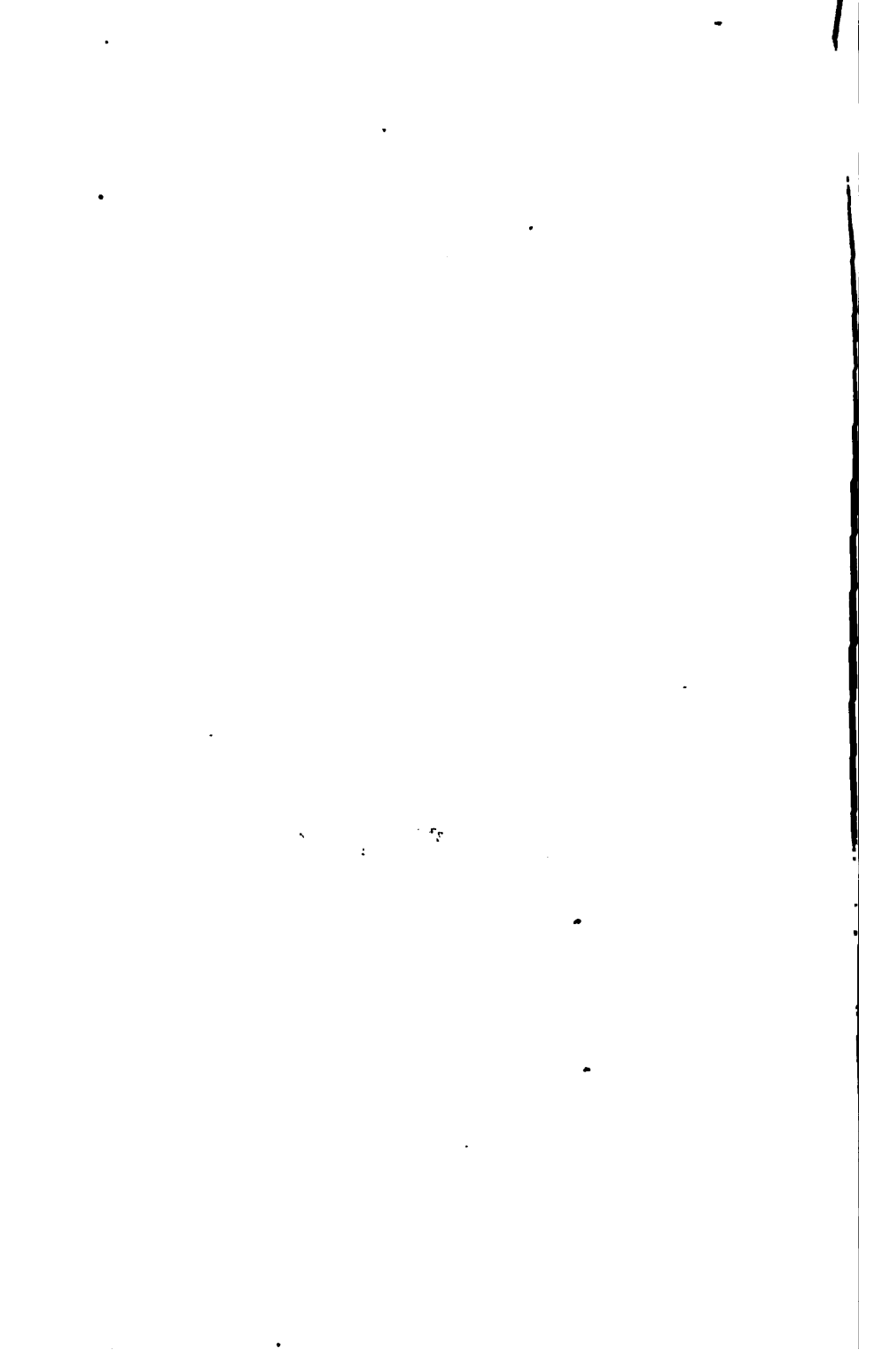












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